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HENRY FOX, FIRST LORD HOLLAND

HIS FAMILY AND RELATIONS

VOLUME I







*Art. David pinxit*

*Emery Walker phsc.*

*Henry Fox  
afterwards Lord Holland*

# HENRY FOX, FIRST LORD HOLLAND

HIS FAMILY AND RELATIONS

BY THE EARL OF ILCHESTER

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

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TO  
LORD ROSEBERY,  
WHOSE KINDLY WORDS ENCOURAGED ME  
TO UNDERTAKE THE INCEPTION  
OF THESE VOLUMES.

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## PREFACE

A FEW introductory remarks may be deemed desirable to indicate the sources from which the new and original materials for these volumes have been drawn.

The manuscripts at Holland House form a natural foundation for any life of Henry Fox. Sir George Trevelyan, Lord Fitzmaurice and Lord Rosebery have already dipped into the most interesting portion of the collection, but I was fortunate enough to find still further precious material, which had lain undisturbed for many years. Amongst them was a series of Fox's own letters, copied, many of them in the third Lady Holland's handwriting, from the Devonshire MSS. The presence of these excerpts encouraged me to believe that her husband, Henry Richard, Lord Holland, was contemplating a life of his grandfather, in addition to that of his uncle, Charles James Fox—a work which was completed twenty years after his death by Lord John Russell. Since these pages were first set up in type, further proof that my suspicions were correct has come to light. By the kindness of the present owner, Clementina, Lady Lilford, I had recently the good fortune to examine a box of papers belonging to Dr John Allen, Lord Holland's trusted friend and librarian. In it, I found a quantity of extracts from the various printed authorities of the period, which clearly indicate the aim and object of Allen's researches. Among these fragments is a note-book with copies of unpublished memoranda and letters taken from the Waldegrave MSS. Of this, the kindness of Lady Lilford and Lord Waldegrave

have enabled me to make use. Some of the extracts are of considerable interest, and as it was too late to include them in the text, I have inserted the most interesting papers as appendices.

Next, the bond of affection which existed between Henry Fox and his elder brother Stephen, Earl of Ilchester, seemed to indicate Melbury as a probable source of material for the work which I was contemplating. Nor was I disappointed. The result of a careful search far exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Over three hundred of Fox's own letters were found hidden away there, besides a quantity of other papers, important for the light which they throw on his life and on that of his father, Sir Stephen Fox.

Further, the indulgence of owners of various historic collections has opened up additional channels of information. To the Duke of Devonshire, I must express my grateful thanks for allowing me to fill the gaps in my copies from the originals in his possession. To Lord Lansdowne also, for placing Fox's correspondence with Shelburne at my disposal ; and to Lord Kerry, for several important documents, which his own researches at Bowood and elsewhere have recently produced. Next, I must express my obligations to Mr. T. F. Fenwick, of Thirlestane House, Cheltenham, for his permission to take copies of Fox's letters among the "Hanbury Papers," which are now included in the Phillips collection ; to the late Sir Francis Waller, also, for granting me access to his Walpole correspondence at Woodcote, near Warwick :<sup>1</sup> and to the Duke of Marlborough and the Hon. Evan Charteris for sundry letters.

On the manuscripts in public collections and the various printed authorities on that period, I need not expatiate. Suffice it to draw attention to the importance of many documents in the Record Office ; and of the Newcastle Papers and other contemporary correspondence in the

<sup>1</sup> Since published by Dr Paget Toynbee.

British Museum. The official number corresponding to these is in all cases noted. Where no specific reference is given, the document in question is to be found among the papers at Holland House or Melbury. If a letter is referred to by the day of the month only, without the year, it will be found that some previous reference has been made to it.

Owing to the war, the Mirepoix-Rouillé correspondence in the *Archives des Affaires Étrangères* in Paris have only very recently become available. In the case of these papers, therefore, I have had to insert certain extracts as appendices.

Family portraits have been largely drawn on to provide the illustrations. My best thanks, however, are due to Mr Greville Douglas for allowing me to include among them a reproduction of his mezzotint by J. R. Smith after W. Lawrenson, entitled "Palemon and Lavinia." The view of Holland House in the background excludes any doubt that the picture refers to the courtship of George III and Lady Sarah Lennox. Tradition relates that the plate and the impressions from it were bought up and destroyed; and the rarity of the engraving gives credence to the story. I am at present unable to locate any other copy.

The view of Kingsgate is taken from a small engraving by B. T. Pouncy, to which Mr Emery Walker very kindly drew my attention, in the topographical collection at the British Museum.

I have done my best to avoid the introduction of long extracts from documents which have already been printed. In one or two cases, however, I have found it necessary to break through this rule, notably in dealing with the controversy between Fox and Shelburne. Certain rearrangements in the sequence of these letters bring out the salient facts in a somewhat different light from that in which they have been previously presented; and this would be unintelligible without the actual text.

I have retained the old spelling in most cases. Punctuation, however, has been altered to facilitate the sense. Square brackets have been made use of in the notes where dates are omitted in the originals.

In conclusion, my further thanks are due to the Hon. J. W. Fortescue, Mr Arthur Bolton, F.S.A. and the Hon. Charles Lawrence, for information on various points in which their help has been of the greatest assistance to me.

ILCHESTER.

*September 1919.*



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# HENRY FOX, FIRST LORD HOLLAND

## CHAPTER I

THE justification for a biography of any celebrated man should rest on the assumption that the story of his life has not been related in comprehensive form, or that new material can be brought forward, which will throw fresh light upon his character, motives and actions. In the case of Henry Fox no adequate account of the doings of his family circle has yet been given to the public. Even the two recent volumes which profess to deal with his political career belie their title.<sup>1</sup> Their merit rests rather upon a valuable and succinct account of English politics in the early stages of the Seven Years War. Further, although the papers at Holland House have already been made use of by various students of eighteenth century history, a quantity of important matter, especially adaptable to the purpose which we have in hand, still remains. Fox's letters at Melbury, to which reference has already been made in the Preface, have proved a valuable discovery; and the kindness of various owners of historical documents relating to the period has brought to light additional evidence of unsuspected interest. This unpublished material from Fox's own pen largely increases our comprehension of his inmost thoughts and aspirations.

Let us, however, qualify our pretensions with a word

<sup>1</sup> *Henry Fox, first Lord Holland: A Study of the Career of an Eighteenth-century Politician*, by Thad. W. Riker, M.A.



of warning, lest the reader should conjure up visions which may lead him to disappointment. The duty of every biographer is to approach his task with strict regard to truth. He must not magnify the virtues or minimise the vices of the subject of his labours. He must beware of that insidious tendency to idealisation, which is the bane of the would-be historian. Let no one suppose, therefore, that we are struggling to raise Henry Fox to some new pedestal. We believe that to those who peruse these pages he will remain, as he has always been represented, a central figure in an age of political corruption. It is impossible to gloss over his shortcomings, though they were the shortcomings of his generation. He acted according to his convictions, and his convictions were those of the large majority of his contemporaries. In fact, the virtues of the more enlightened exceptions to the general rule drew attention to the failings of politicians of the Walpole school.

Nor shall we seriously attempt to place Fox upon the same plane as his great rival, Pitt. Both men were endowed with superabundant talent. But each had his own sphere of greatness. Each had his individual limitations. They were as opposite to one another as the two poles. Where Fox failed, Pitt excelled; where Pitt was weakest, Fox was at his best. Yet the genius of Pitt was more serviceable to his country than that of Fox. In constructive policy the former was unsurpassed. His aptitude for foreign affairs, and his far-sighted comprehension of the necessities of a world-wide war, enabled him to lead his country safely through her hour of peril. Fox, in his short tenure of office, showed little similar promise. The taste for the solution of continental or colonial problems did not run in his veins. It is true that he had few chances of distinguishing himself in such matters when in office; for his hands were too tied to enable him to develop that power of initiative which is so necessary for the guiding hand

in the State. He shone in administrative detail rather than in original conception. He excelled in debate, and more than all in his knowledge of mankind. No one understood better than Fox the idiosyncrasies of his fellow creatures. He knew well when to wheedle, and when to threaten too. In the House of Commons he could be firm and pliant in turn. Yet how different were his geniality and courtesy from that haughty arrogance, which was Pitt's besetting sin in his relations with his colleagues! He was wont to make full use of his pleasant smile and convincing frankness to turn a wavering voter or to win over a new friend. The party manager was indispensable in the era of which we write, and in that capacity Fox reigned supreme.

It would certainly be impossible to depict the subject of our theme in any heroic pose. Yet, in this new portrait, we hope to paint him in colours which the world has not yet seen. It will be our privilege to deal with the most lovable side of his nature. He will appear first as the devoted brother; as the boon companion, whose friendships were for his part indissoluble; next, as the fond husband; and, later, he will be found in the bosom of his family, encircled by a band of children, relatives and intimates, beloved and worshipped by all around. Many may find fault with Fox's political code; few will throw stones at the domesticity of his private life.

No mention of the Fox family can be traced before the middle of the sixteenth century. Robert, whose name is the earliest recorded of the Wiltshire branch, lived at Farley, a small village situated five miles to the south-east of the cathedral town of Salisbury. Another family of similar name were resident in Hallamshire, in Yorkshire, about the same period; but it is impossible to discover any connection between them. The frequent use of the name Stephen in both cases is the only link by which a chain of relationship can be forged. Robert

Fox married Agnes, daughter of Stephen Whitlock—still a familiar patronymic in those parts—a native of the neighbouring hamlet of East Dean. The only son of this marriage, William, who died in 1652, married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Pavey, of Plaitford, co. Wilts.<sup>1</sup>

“As it is not material to enter into the genealogy of the family, on the side of the father, who was of substance enough to breed up this his son in a liberal education, thereby to impregnate and manure the seeds of virtue and honesty which he had received from his birth; so it is altogether needless to ransack the Heralds’ office for the origin and descent of his mother.”<sup>2</sup> Thus wrote the biographer of their son, Stephen, who termed himself “a wonderful child of Providence,” and stated that he was born “of vertuous parents, distinguished from their neighbours by their orderly and pious liveing”<sup>3</sup>. Suffice it, therefore, to conclude that the Foxs were of honest yeoman stock, and to agree that their pedigree needs no further elucidation.

William Fox’s family was numerous. It consisted of eight sons and two daughters. Of these, two only, John and Stephen, survived their father. Between the two brothers some confusion appears to have arisen. John, the elder, was born in 1616, and died in 1691. For the events of the earlier part of his life we are indebted to the above-quoted fragmentary autobiography in the handwriting of his brother.<sup>4</sup> “Bredd up by our mother’s

<sup>1</sup> Hoare’s *History of Wilts.* Pittis speaks of Mrs Fox as Elizabeth.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Stephen Fox, 1717*, by William Pittis, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Autobiography of Sir S. Fox (Melbury MSS.).

<sup>4</sup> References to Sir Stephen’s own life are copied from this document, and from the aforementioned printed *Memoirs*, unless expressly stated to be taken from other authorities.

The author of the notice on Sir Stephen Fox in the *Dictionary of National Biography* has mixed up the brothers. Consequently the earlier portion of that article is unreliable.

uncle, Mr Ranking, and prefer'd to Dr Mason, Dean of Sarum,"<sup>1</sup> he became closet-keeper to Charles II, then the Prince of Wales. He followed the fortunes of his master in England and abroad, always in poor circumstances, and often unpaid for long periods at a time. He accompanied the Prince in his fruitless expedition to the Thames in 1648, with the British ships which had remained true to the Stuart cause; in his abortive journey to Jersey during the following year; and in his attempt to regain the Crown by a landing in Scotland in 1650—an expedition which came to so disastrous a conclusion at the battle of Worcester. Afterwards, we are told, having assisted the escape of his royal master to France, John Fox returned to his family at Farley. His later years were passed on an estate which he had purchased at Avebury, in Wilts. By his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Henry Smart, of Plymouth, he had several daughters, and one son, John, born in 1640, whose only son, Stephen, died unmarried about 1699.

Stephen was the sixth son of William Fox. He was born at Farley on March 27, 1627, and was also educated by his uncle, at the grammar-school in the close at Salisbury, whither he went at the age of six. There he remained "untill upwards of 13 years of age, and was in the 4 row of sd schoole advanced to make litt. verses upon a theame, and the top boy of the dancing schoole." The theory that he received advancement by the notice of Brian Duppa, Bishop of Salisbury, is probably incorrect. Duppa was only appointed to that see in 1641; while we learn that at the end of May 1640 Stephen went to his brother and sister-in-law, who were with the court at Richmond. He took service under his brother, and while the latter was ill with small-pox later in the year, he performed his duties at St James's. There he remained when the court was dispersed. "I

<sup>1</sup> Dr Mason was appointed tutor to Charles, Prince of Wales, when the Prince was but three years old.



waited on ye chaplain at the governesses' table for my dyet." He was next chosen to attend Lady Stafford (*sic*) when she went "to carry ye King's crown privately to Oxford." "She gave me a new black suit, which was the only new cloaths that I had since coming from my good uncle Rankin; for my brother's place could not afford it." On his return in March 1642, Stephen was taken by Lady Sunderland as page for her husband, but was not considered strong enough to accompany him in the field. He was with her at Penshurst, when the news was brought of Lord Sunderland's untimely death at the battle of Newbury. Fox then entered the employment of Lord Leicester,<sup>1</sup> Lady Sunderland's father, who held the post of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland for two years.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Percy, Leicester's brother-in-law, Master of the Horse to the Prince of Wales, was Fox's next patron; and with him he found permanent employment. He accompanied him on the successful campaign of 1644, and subsequently to France, whither Lord Percy retired in 1645, after his loss of favour with the King. Prince Charles himself arrived in Paris early in 1646, and restored Percy to his former post. The stables and hounds were handed over to Fox's care; and later the arrangements for journeys and hunting expeditions were also included among his duties. Fox's dexterity and diligence were such that he attracted the notice of his royal master, and thus laid the foundation of his subsequent good fortune.

In July 1649, after a period of mourning for his father, Charles moved from the Hague to Brussels.

"He was reed by the Arch Duke Leopold, then governor

<sup>1</sup> Robert, second Earl of Leicester, who married Dorothy, daughter of Henry, ninth Earl of Northumberland, and sister of Henry, Lord Percy.

<sup>2</sup> He was never permitted by the King to take over the government, and was relieved of the office in 1643.

of Flanders, wth great magnificence, lodged in the court, and entertained and presented nobley with a rich coach and 8 exterordinary good large horses, defraid from his enterance into the Spanish teritorys, before he came to Antwerpe. Where I rideing in my post just behind the King's coach, in the givinge a joyfull volley, [a soldier] shot me wth a musket and filled my face full of powder, wch had disfigrd me for ever, but that Mr Pile, the King's chirurgeon, took that care of me, that he pict out almoust every corne of powder, wch made it a tedious painefull cure, and the King's residence at Brussells the longer ; for untill I was fitt for it ye King did not remove from Brussells, it haveing bin my constant and peculiar businesse. And then I hastned post to Parris, and brought at ye time appoynted to Perron,<sup>1</sup> the first frontier garrison in France, an equipage from Parris of 65 saddel horses and 5 coaches, to remove then a numerous famely from Perron to St Germaines, where the Queen Mother resided at that time."

When Charles set out for Scotland in 1750, Stephen was left in charge of the horses and vehicles in Holland, with orders to bring them to England when required. Fate determined otherwise ; for, after Worcester, carriages were only of use to expedite Charles's flight to the Continent. "All support failing thoes that depended upon ye King," Stephen returned to England in September 1651, and joined his brother at Farley, whither the latter had escaped after the royal defeat. He found his father ill, and his sister with her children in great distress ; though he had already assisted them a year earlier with a loan of 85 guineas. At his father's house he met his sister-in-law's bosom friend, Miss Elizabeth Whittle, and fell in love with her. They were married in December. "Wee all lived for that winter," he wrote, "as chearfully together and as religeously as if wee had bin rich."

Next spring, while Stephen and his brother were debating whether "they should be farmers together,"

<sup>1</sup> Peronne.

the younger was sent for by the Earl of Devonshire to be keeper of his privy purse<sup>1</sup>; but ten months later he was summoned to France by the King to take up his old position at court. He had been absent about twenty months, during which time Percy had become Lord Chamberlain and had been succeeded as Master of the Horse by Prince Rupert. In 1654, by an arrangement between the English and French Governments, Charles was forced to leave Paris and seek a new haven of refuge in Germany; and in the necessary reorganisation of his suite the payment of the King's private and domestic expenses was placed in Fox's hands. To Clarendon's good offices, the recipient of these favours "always considered the appointment due, and in later years he stood forward manfully for his benefactor in the face of a hostile House of Commons, and against the wishes of his King."<sup>2</sup>

"King Charles" (again to take up Fox's own narrative), "of his own meer motion without being sought to, chose me to be his *Maitre d'Hotel*, and entrusted me with all money affairs without account to any but himself, and gave me the absolute government of all expenses of his house, in the execution whereof his Majesty was pleased often to declare great satisfaction. Insomuch that upon his happy restoration he thought nothing sufficient for me, for I was not only continued an officer of the Green Cloth, which naturally fell to me, and also trusted with receiving and issuing great sums upon account of secret service, but also joined to these trusts a very beneficial office of Paymaster General of his Majesties' Guards first, and all landforces soon after, which begot an undertaking of a regular, constant payment by agreement, much prest for by the officers of the Guards and forces, and earnestly recommended by the then general, the Duke of Albemarle, and highly approved of by his Majesty and my Lord Treasurer."

<sup>1</sup> The envoy employed was the famous Thomas Hobbes, author of *The Leviathan*.

<sup>2</sup> Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, iii. 410.



Fox had carried out the duties of Cofferer since his return in 1653 with much diligence, under the title of *Clerk of His Majesty's Kitchen*. The little court were often almost in want. On one occasion especially, we are told, Fox's thrifty management stood his master in good stead. Charles's privy purse was empty, and a debt of honour was awaiting payment. Fox came to the rescue with a sufficient sum of money, saved from the allowances made for household expenses. The royal credit was thus preserved, and for this service the King made him a grant of arms, dated Brussels, October 30, 1658.<sup>1</sup> Previously, at Spa, in 1654, Charles had given him, as a token of esteem, a silver-gilt ewer and basin, which had belonged to the late King.<sup>2</sup> Throughout his residence abroad Fox was in close correspondence with the royalists at home, and was thus enabled to announce the news of Cromwell's death to Charles, when playing tennis, "six hours before any express reach'd Brussels."

Fox had set his heart on obtaining confirmation in his post of Cofferer, but at the Restoration his hopes were dashed to the ground. William Ashburnham, who had been granted the reversion by Charles I in 1645, claimed his right. Twice, in later years, Fox was disappointed of the same office: once in 1679, and again at the Revolution of 1688, when the post was joined to that of Treasurer of the Household. He obtained, however, other rewards, as we have seen; and was knighted in 1665. He entered Parliament for the first time in 1661, and sat for Salisbury. Many years later he made his last appearance in the House of Commons, as member for the same town, when the seat became vacant in 1713, owing to the death of his son, Charles. He sat in various Parliaments for Cricklade; and for Westminster, where a hotly contested election, in which he was successful, is quoted by Macaulay from *L'Hermitage*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> These are still preserved at Melbury.

<sup>3</sup> *History of England* (ed. 1858), iv. 617.

His retirement from the Paymastership in 1680, in consequence of the burden of other duties,<sup>1</sup> did not sever the connection of the family from that office. His son, Charles Fox, became Joint-Paymaster with Nicholas Johnson, and undertook the whole duties when the latter died two years later. Evelyn believed that the change was due to the intrigues and jealousy of Lord Danby, the Lord Treasurer.<sup>2</sup> The latter frankly told the Bishop of Rochester that "Fox's credit was so over-greate with the bankers and monied men, that he could procure none but by his means." True it was that no loan was too great for Sir Stephen to raise; he was implicitly trusted by the financiers, who knew that what he promised he performed. All the writers of the day allow that the profits from the Pay Office were very great, yet no word or suggestion can be found to sully his reputation for the strictest probity. "He is believed," says Evelyn, "to be worth at least £200,000, honestly gotten and unenvied, which is next to a miracle. With all this he continues as humble and ready to do a courtesie as ever he was. . . . In a word, never was a man more fortunate than Sir Stephen. He is an handsome person, vertuous and very religious."<sup>3</sup>

A fortune thus gained might have caused the man who lacked the confidence of the public, to become an object of suspicion and hatred. And therein, as we shall see, lies the difference between Sir Stephen and his son, Henry. Both were adored by their families, and no praise was too great for them in their circle of intimate friends. Yet the father was extolled as a pattern of virtue, while the son, rightly or wrongly, was vilified, and his simplest action disparaged and misunderstood.

Honours and offices came showering in upon Fox. A Commissionership of the Treasury and the Commissionership of the Horse were respectively in 1679 and

<sup>1</sup> Autobiography.

<sup>2</sup> *Diary* (ed. 1827), iii. 58.

<sup>3</sup> *Diary*, iii. 36.

1680 added to his other duties. The former office he retained, with the Green Cloth, under James II, whose servant he remained as long as there was a King in England to serve. He looked, however, we are told, upon James's flight as abdication; and then, not till then, did he appear at the new court. He again undertook the same offices; but in 1697 he aspired to higher power. He disputed with Montague the chief seat at the Treasury Board, vacant through Godolphin's resignation. It was an unequal struggle. A young man of high political promise, with all the world before him, was pitted against the veteran of seventy summers. Youth gained the day; and age at length retired from the contest, with no good grace, we fear. Fox led the procession of the House of Commons at Queen Anne's coronation; but refused her appeal for his services, and prayed, on account of his years, to be allowed to retire into private life.

Sir Stephen invested the bulk of his fortune in real estate. Most of the property which he purchased was in Wilts and Somerset; but he had also land in the northern counties. He built himself a house at Chiswick in 1682, and there he died in 1716.<sup>1</sup> He also built himself a mansion at Redlynch, near Bruton, an estate which he had acquired by purchase from Samuel Gorges and his wife, Dame Margaret Hastings, in 1672. He devoted large sums to good works, founding and endowing charitable institutions at Farley and Redlynch, at Brome in Suffolk,<sup>2</sup> and Ashby in Northants. He rebuilt Farley Church, where he is buried; rebuilt that at Culford, in Suffolk; repewed Salisbury Cathedral; and erected chancels at Redlynch and elsewhere.

Though sometimes attributed to Nell Gwynn, the

<sup>1</sup> The house was sold in 1719, after Lady Fox's death, to a Mr Compton. It must not be confused with the Duke of Devonshire's villa, where Sir Stephen's grandson, Charles James Fox, breathed his last.

<sup>2</sup> Brome and Culford belonged to the Cornwallis family, into which Sir Stephen's eldest daughter married.

scheme for the foundation of Chelsea Hospital was due to Sir Stephen's initiative. Evelyn tells us that Fox arranged to repurchase the site for the King from the Royal Society, to whom Charles II had given the land. He further undertook the collection of the necessary funds for the erection of the building, as the Treasury refused all contribution to the cost. He himself advanced over £6,000 to Wren, during the period of construction, in order that the contracts should be regularly paid; and refused interest on the money, because it was loaned in the cause of charity.<sup>1</sup> In all, he contributed nearly £14,000 to this worthy object, and gave a vast amount of personal attention to the details and organisation of the institution.

Pepys and Evelyn, in their Memoirs, constantly bear witness to the happiness of his married life. "The House sat till 3 o'clock, and then up; and I, with Sir Stephen Fox, to his house to dinner, and the Cofferer with us. There I find his lady, a fine woman, and seven the prettiest children of their's that ever I knew almost. A very genteel dinner, and in great state and fashion, and excellent discourse."<sup>2</sup> His hospitality was lavish, his table profuse. He took great interest in the fine arts, and employed the best artists of the day to decorate his houses. Evelyn relates that he dined at Chiswick in 1683 with Sir Stephen, and found there Verrio, "who had brought his draught and designs for the painting on ye staircase in Sir Stephen's new house."<sup>3</sup> So pleased was William III with the building, that he exclaimed to the Earl of Portland, on his first visit to it, "The place is perfectly fine. I could live here five days."<sup>4</sup> His portraits and those of his family are by Lely and Kneller, the leading painters of the period.

<sup>1</sup> "Sir S. Fox's memorial about the Royal Hospital at Chelsea, 21 Octo. 1712" (Melbury MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, iii. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Evelyn, *Diary*, iii. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Walford's *Old and New London*, vi. 566.



His first wife, Elizabeth Whittle, "sister to Mr Whittle, one of the King's<sup>1</sup> chirurgeons," was born in 1627. She accompanied her husband abroad, and three children were born before their return to England. Of ten children, only two daughters and one son reached maturity. The eldest, Elizabeth, born in 1656, married Charles, Lord Cornwallis, and died in 1680. The third daughter, Jane, was born in 1669. To her, Lady Sunderland<sup>2</sup> tried to marry her son, Lord Spencer. The young man was steeped in extravagance, and Sir Stephen would have none of him, saying that his daughter should only marry the man of her choice.<sup>3</sup> She became the wife of George, Earl of Northampton, in 1686, and died in 1721.

Of their sons, Charles alone reached manhood. He was born at Brussels on January 2, 1660, and to him Charles II stood sponsor. He travelled in his youth with Dr Younger, Dean of Salisbury, and in 1679 entered Parliament as Member for Eye in Suffolk, and subsequently sat for Cricklade and New Sarum. He became Joint-Paymaster in 1680, and Paymaster two years later. He was dismissed from this office by James II, "for voteing in Parliament against the power of the Papists to be equal with Protestants." Yet the King "was pleased to command yt ye rules that had bin observed in ye well exicuting of that office by him, should be given him in writing, that Lord Ranelagh, who succeeded him, might observe the same." He was appointed Joint-Receiver and Paymaster for Ireland by King William on his accession, but was dismissed in 1696 owing to the misrepresentation of his colleague, Lord Coningsby; although he had paid up at a moment's notice for the Government over £40,000, to which Coningsby had not contributed a penny. King William subsequently recog-

<sup>1</sup> Charles II.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Anne Digby, daughter of the second Earl of Bristol, married Robert, second Earl of Sunderland, in 1665.

<sup>3</sup> Evelyn, *Diary*, iii. 50.

nised his error, and granted Fox a pension of £1,500, but did not restore him to the office annexed by his late colleague. Charles Fox was again appointed Joint-Paymaster with John Howe by Queen Anne, after Lord Ranelagh's dismissal, being placed in charge of the pay of the forces abroad. He received Marlborough's special thanks for his services.

"Mr Fox, if it [had] not bin for yor exactness never to have failed in furnishing ye army under my command with 6 weeks pay beforehand, which I never wanted on ye day it was due, I could not have gon to ye Danube. For wch I doe hartely thank you for yor exactness."

But this did not save him from removal shortly afterwards, for his vote on a bill to prevent occasional conformity; nor could his father's entreaties soften Lord Godolphin's heart, for even his pension was taken from him. He had not "during his severall imploymts any advantage but his bare sallery, & is ye only great accomptant that hath allways in its proper season declared his accts, for wch he hath his qyets from time to time to ye last year of his being trusted." He died in 1713, without issue, having married, in 1679, Elizabeth Carr Trollope,<sup>1</sup> daughter of Sir William Trollope, of Caswick, co. Lincoln.

Lady Fox died in 1696; and seven years later Sir Stephen, though in his seventy-seventh year, married Christian Hopes, daughter of the Rev. Francis Hopes, rector from 1670 to 1678 of Haceby, co. Lincoln. In the register of that parish occurs the record of Mr Hopes's marriage to Christian Palfryman on April 28, 1670; and also of the baptism of their daughter Christian on October 12, 1677.<sup>2</sup> The Hopeses, we are told, were a branch of the Scotch family of Kers.

<sup>1</sup> She died in 1704/05 (Hoare's *History of Wilts*).

<sup>2</sup> Haceby Parish Register. The inscription on her monument at Farley, that she died on 17 February, 1718/19, at the age of thirty-nine, is therefore incorrect.



SIR STEPHEN FOX.

By Sir P. Iely.

1800

1801

1802



Miss Hopes was her favourite in the family, and, some time before her marriage, was sitting with them, when a letter was brought in addressed "Lady Fox." "Who can that mean?" was the general exclamation. "I think the letter is meant for me," said Miss Hopes.

Let Sir Stephen, however, again speak for himself :

"Upon Sunday, the 11 of July, 1703, I married in my house at Chiswick Miss Christian Hope, who had lived under my roof as a friend of my daughter Eliza. Carr. Fox near seven years, who always guided herself by a strict rule of piety, and was very helpful to me by reading and thereby entertaining my spare hours in my retirement, with such advantage that I thought her conversation would be useful to my old age by having so good a company for the remainder of my life. . . .

"At my age I little expected to have added to my race and family, to my great surprise as well as ye wonder of the world, for on the 12 day of Sept. 1704, about half an hour after twelve o'clock, there was borne my son Stephen Fox, wch name was given him by my good neighbours the Countess of Falconbridge, Sr John Chardin, Kt, and Edward Nicholas Esq., and christened in my chapple by Mr Hutcheson, my chaplain.

"A greater wonder happened on the 28 of Sepr, 1705, about half an hour after three o'clock in the morning: my son Henry, and in less than a quarter of an hour after, my daughter Christian were borne, large children for twinning. The first not being likely to live, they were both presently christened by those names, wch were very decently confirmed on Munday, the 15 of October following, by the Bpp of London, and Edw. Southwell Esqr. for Sir Richard Cox, Lord Chancellor of Ireland and the Countess of Burlington. . . . Perform'd in my chapple by the said Mr Hutcheson; and all the company, with Lady Betty Southwell and the good minister of Chiswick, dynd that day with mee."

His daughter, Christian, fell from a window, and died on January 20, 1708; but on April 19 of the same year,

a second was born, christened Charlotte.<sup>1</sup> Sir Stephen died at Chiswick on October 28, 1716, and was buried in the church at Farley. His widow died three years later at Bath, and was laid to rest beside him.

Beyond the foregoing appreciation by her venerable spouse, we have little knowledge of Christian Fox's personality and character. We have, indeed, the memorandum, in Henry Fox's handwriting, of her charge to him and his brother on her death-bed. It reads as a pathetic prayer for the safety of orphans starting forth alone to face the perils of the world.<sup>2</sup> It is an impassioned appeal from the depths of a loving heart. "Don't be a fop, don't be a rake, mind on your name *Stephen* Fox, that I hope will keep you from being wicked. Think on your name; 'twill even fly in your face, and say your father did so. Think on all his virtues and follow ym." "Love your brother, Stephen," she added; and never did command fall on more obedient ears. The brothers, inseparable in their school days, showed by their example the true meaning of fraternal affection. Henry's subsequent activity in public life did not make meetings with his elder and more retiring brother easier, yet every year mutual visits in town and country were an obligation which neither could forego; and their correspondence testifies to the reliance which each was wont to place upon the judgment of the other.

To Harry, Lady Fox's advice was to eschew evil company, "though," said she, "you having a less fortune, won't be subject to so many temptations." Little did she foresee how the character and temperament of her younger son would lead him into trials which his more easy-going brother would never have reason to experience. "Take care and avoid ill company," she went

<sup>1</sup> She married, in 1729, the Hon. Edward Digby, eldest surviving son of William, fifth Baron Digby, by whom she had six sons and one daughter. Mr Digby died in 1746, predeceasing his father. Mrs Digby survived until 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in Princess Liechtenstein's *Holland House*, i. 26.

on, "if you don't you are gone; for by yt many young men are ruin'd, from thence come all ye vices yt Youth is apt to fall into. Then you'll learn to swear, to drink to rake about, to game, and at last to be ruined by those you unhappily think your friends. Don't affect, or think it genteel or a pretty thing to be a rake, for if you are wicked what will your estate signifye; you'd be the most despicable thing, to all but ym who are either such rogues as to flatter you in it or so vile themselves as to approve it." She urged him to honour and obey his trustees; not to be conceited "wn you come of age, or self sufficient; don't think yourself above advice, for yn you'd want it most." And in conclusion, to both lads, comes the solemn warning, "Let me only tell you, when I am gone, it will show your love or hate to me, as you obey or disobey these my instructions."

The injunction was well chosen for old or young alike. Yet her common-sense doctrines were hardly of a nature to appeal to the understanding of those school-boys, with no knowledge of the uncertainties of the future. To create a lasting impression, something more than plain speech was required—a mother's influence. This, also, was lacking; and at this distance of time we cannot judge of the value of the warning, or realise whether the effect of her remarks were only limited to the recollection of the sad scene and the shock of parting.

The boys went together to Eton in January 1715, at an early age. Indeed, Henry was little more than nine years old. They were domiciled at Mrs Snape's house, Mr Charles Snape acting as their private tutor. Dr Andrew Snape, who had been a chaplain to Queen Anne and upheld the High Church and Tory principles, was head master until 1719, when he was succeeded by Dr Henry Bland.

A ledger, preserved among the manuscripts at Melbury, gives a statement of the expenses of the brothers' first year at school.

" Mr Stephen Fox went to Eaton 10 Janry. 1715.<sup>1</sup>

" Mr Henry Fox went to Eaton 19 Janry. 1715.

		£	s.	d.
10 January	By expences to Eaton, severall times entred in the Stable acctt in January 1715 . . . . .	3	16	10
	To Ditto more in May . . . . .	0	5	4
19 . . . . .	To Dr Snapes 4 Guineys . . . . .	4	6	0
	To Mr Carter 4 Guineys . . . . .	4	6	0
	To Mr Snape 2 Guineys . . . . .	2	3	0
	To Mrs Snapes 1 Guin. amongst her servants . . . . .	1	1	6
24 . . . . .	To Mr Adams, Goldsmith, for Plate . . . . .	8	11	10
16 February	Expences of Lady Fox, a Journey to Eaton . . . . .	5	5	8
		<hr/> £29 16 2		
14 June, 1715	Paid Mrs Snapes $\frac{1}{2}$ a years Board for Mr Stephen & Mr Henry Fox to the 10 of July next . . . . .	25	0	0
	To Mr Snapes Private Tutor $\frac{1}{2}$ year, then 8 G. . . . .	8	12	0
	To Mr Carter Master $\frac{1}{2}$ a year, then 4 G. . . . .	4	6	0
	To the Writeing Master 5s. each entrance . . . . .	0	10	0
	To Ditto for teaching 10s. each $\frac{1}{2}$ year . . . . .	1	0	0
	Paid for a Chest of Drawers Buro &c. . . . .	3	2	10
		<hr/> £42 10 10		
	Paid Postidge of Letters . . . . .	0	2	9
	Paid Carriage of severall things . . . . .	0	1	5
	Paid Coach-hire . . . . .	0	7	0
	Paid Fireing and Candles . . . . .	0	14	0
	Paid for sweeping, Church & Schoole . . . . .	0	1	0
	Recent to Montem . . . . .	0	1	0
		<hr/> £1 7 11		
	Bookes to the Stationer his Bill . . . . .	3	2	8
	Paid for a 100 of Pens . . . . .	0	1	4
		<hr/> £3 4 0		
	To necessaries to apparell . . . . .	2	11	2
October 1715, 13	Paid Mr Francis Fox, Taylor, for apparell for Mr Stephen & Mr Henry Fox . . . . .	4	12	0
October 1715, 31	Paid for cutting Mr Henry Fox's Haire & for 2 paire of gloves . . . . .	0	4	2

<sup>1</sup> 1714/15



1715]

## ETON BILLS

19

Further items of interest appear in a similar entry of accounts for subsequent years :

		£	s	d.
January 1715, 10	To Pocket money . . . . .	£0	16	0
	Paid for a cloake Bagg . . . . .	0	16	0
	Paid mending Master's cloathes . . . . .	0	2	6
	Paid for Raquettes & Shittlecocks . . . . .	0	4	0
March 1716, 9	Paid Mr Richd Adamson for 2 Perry-wigs for Mr Ste. Fox at 2 Guineys each . . . . .	4	6	0
June 1716, 9	To the Hatter for lineing & looping . . . . .	0	0	8
7 July	To Dr Snapes for Mr Stephen & Mr Henry Fox's remove into the Upper School 10 Guineys . . . . .	10	15	0
24 September	To Mr Stephen Fox 6 guin. to stand Godfather to Mr Ste. Gore <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	6	9	0

An abstract places the total expenses of the boys at Eton, for the two years which preceded their father's death, at £256 16s. 6d.

<sup>1</sup> Mary, eldest daughter of Lord and Lady Northampton (daughter of Sir Stephen Fox), married William Gore, Esq., of Tring Park, Herts.

## CHAPTER II

HENRY'S earliest letter in existence was to his father from Eton. It is dated January 20, 1716, and is well written in a large, firm hand :

DEAR PAPA,

" I, hearing you liked our letters, write this in hopes of pleasing you, and to lett you know that my Brother and I are both very well, and that I am very glad that you have had so good company to divert you in your sickness. I have diligently kept your orders concerning my goodness, not only in my book, but in my religion, which you chiefly commanded me to be good in. Pray give my duty to Mama and love to my sister, and tell her wee all thank her for her nuts. Pray give my service to my cousins and ev'rybody else.

" I am your most obedient son,

" HENRY FOX."

Letters from Lady Fox to the brothers give us some further glimpses of their school-days. They furnish, indeed, little idea of Henry's taste for his studies or for games. Yet some portions are not unworthy of a passing glance. They are undated ; but, as we find no mention of Sir Stephen in those here transcribed, we may conclude that they were written subsequent to 1716, the date of his death.

" Sept. ye 28,

"CHISWICK.

" I think you and your bro' used to be fond of pigeon pye, and therefore I have sent one with as many pigeons as you are years old. I hope it will be as good a gussle

as your loaves was. Be merry and wise. Don't make yrselves sick nor do anything you should not in the eating it. . . . I am glad you like yr writing deskes. Pray be care not spoile 'em. I have sent you to wipe penns with, and will send you a smother very soon."

"CHISWICK, Oct. ye 15.

"I hope my dear Harry is as good as bro. Ste, tho he is so moddest as not to bragg of it ; and to encourage him to continue so, I have sent some little cakes because bohee tea does not use to agree with you, and if I could but be sure that you really deserved it I would send some chocte. Tell me, do you keep yr promiss of being very diligent at yr books, and constantly say yr prayers, and are respectfull to Mrs Snapes, and never say an ill word. If you do all this, then you may expect every thing that is kind from, my dear, your very

"Affectionate mother

"C. Fox.

"I will send your silk stockings, but I should think you wiser not to ware 'em till Easter, for 'tis very foolish to ware silk stockings, especially such a light couler, this cold, dirty weather."

In fact, our knowledge of the years which the Foxs spent at Eton is unfortunately very limited ; and any assertions, which assign the commencement of lifelong friendships or the foundation of future rivalries to this period of Henry's life, must be purely conjectural. A statement in Creasy's *Lives of Eminent Etonians* seeks to couple the names of Pitt and Pratt with Lyttelton and Fox. Yet the suggestion of intimacy between them cannot be reasonably sustained. The difference in age is too great. Pitt and Lyttelton were four years younger than Fox, while Pratt was not born until 1714. The Eton school-list for 1718 places the names of the brothers Fox next one another in Fifth Form, whereas Pitt's appears in Lower Greek, Third Form.

The boys appear to have been still at Eton in Septem-

ber 1719,<sup>1</sup> and in all probability they did not leave the school until the end of 1720. Of their home life, after Lady Fox's death, some scanty details are available. Among Sir Stephen's papers at Melbury is a folio containing the minutes of various meetings held by the trustees under his will. Among the statements of their transactions we find the following entries :

"*April 9, 1719.*—That if Mrs Susan Wingfield<sup>2</sup> thinks it worth her while to take a house in a convenient place, there will be a room taken for business, and others furnished for Mrs Fox<sup>3</sup> and her brothers when they come to town, with an allowance for diet whilst they are there."

"*Nov. 24, 1719.*—That Mrs Susan Wingfield, having at our desire taken an house, the rent whereof is £53 per ann. (besides a pew in the chappel of £6 per ann.) for the service of the family, . . . she be allowed 25 shillings per week for the boarding of Miss Fox and Mrs Dorothy Wingfield, and thirty shillings for the two Mr Fox's pr week while in town."

"*Jan. 24, 1721.*<sup>4</sup>—That Mr Foxs be sent to Christchurch, and recommend'd to Mr George Wigan's care for a tutor, and that he be desired to enter them in the college and provide chambers for them.

"That allowances for Mr Foxs' expenses at Oxford in the college or otherwise be, to Mr Stephen Fox £150 pr ann., and Mr Henry £120 pr ann., besides the charge for their servants and horses, and all their clothes sent from London."

The final entry tallies with Henry's arrival at Oxford, for his matriculation form at Christ Church was dated February 20, 1721.<sup>5</sup> Presumably Stephen went there at the same time. Details of their University careers are even more scanty than those of their Eton life. Henry appears to have studied for the bar. We hear of him as

<sup>1</sup> Miss C. Fox to S. Fox, September 9, 1719.

<sup>2</sup> A trusted servant of Sir Stephen Fox.

<sup>3</sup> Miss Charlotte Fox.

<sup>4</sup> 1720/21.

<sup>5</sup> 1720/21.



"an irresistible conqueror at chess,"<sup>1</sup> a game at which, many years later, Charles James Fox was also reckoned to excel; and his sister once mentioned that he was interested in the study of flowers.

Stephen left Oxford at the end of the summer of 1723. He was in residence in July, but by the end of November had gone abroad, accompanied by Dr John Wigan, with whom he travelled on the Continent for nearly two years. Henry remained at Oxford after his brother's departure, and, though he does not appear to have taken his degree, was still up in December 1724. Charlotte Fox wrote in a letter to Stephen :

"Harry says he dares not commit his politicks to paper or else he would entertain you with them. He has been to yt delightful Coco Tree. He stay'd there till 3 a clock, and like a good-for-nothing toad, as you call him, brought home no news nor entertainment for you."

By the terms of Sir Stephen's will, Henry, who was to be "bred up for some honourable employment," received an allowance of £200 a year until he reached the age of twenty-one. He was then to come into an inheritance, computed by his father at between six and seven hundred pounds a year. This included an estate at Lambeth Wick, the Receivership of South Wales for three lives, besides annuities, etc., contingent on his mother's death. The residue and surplus of her estate also fell to his portion. A statement of accounts between the two brothers, when the younger came of age, shows that the sum which

<sup>1</sup> Dr J. Wigan to H. Fox, February 19th, 1724. Dr John Wigan (1696-1739) was brother of the previously mentioned George Wigan. They were sons of William Wigan, rector of Kensington. John became Principal of New Inn Hall, at Oxford, in 1726, but resigned after his appointment as Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1732. He went, with his friend Mr Trelawney, the Governor, to Jamaica in 1738, and died there the following year. He was the author of several works, the best known being a folio edition of *Aretæus*.

had been accumulating for him at compound interest during his minority amounted to £9,526 12s. 8d. This included the proceeds of the sale of an annuity of £70 in 1726—a matter of £1,400. Lambeth Wick and the Receivership brought in roughly £450 per annum. Thus, calculating the interest on the capital sum at 5 per cent., his total yearly income was approximately £900.

Henry Fox, therefore, started into the world with a comfortable income for a younger son. He was equipped with a fortune sufficient for all reasonable requirements. And even in those early days we get glimpses of a desire to profit by his opportunities. It was not in his nature to allow his talent to lie hidden in a napkin. Dr Wigan, in his first letter from abroad,<sup>1</sup> said: "Holland is a place only for persons who endeavour to get money as you design to do, not for such gentlemen as Ste. and I, who only love to spend it."

The above matter-of-fact statement of Henry's financial position in 1726 needs the indulgence of the reader. Yet it is of vast importance in dealing with a feature of his early career which calls for a more impartial treatment than it has hitherto received. Every writer who deals with this period of his life, from Coxe to his latest biographer, Mr Riker, all tell the same tale—that extravagance and an insatiable craving for the excitement of the gambling-table, were the leading characteristics of Henry's youth. We are given to understand that he wasted his time and spent all his patrimony in riotous living. But on what are such statements founded? It is impossible to produce a single passage in the writings of any reliable contemporary, Chesterfield alone excepted, which will bear out the accusation. Even the authority in question is singularly unconvincing, and, moreover, was influenced throughout his life by a bias against the young man, which stands in need of explanation. "His father," he wrote, "left him a fair younger brother's portion, which

<sup>1</sup> Brussels, November 24, 1723.

he soon spent in the common vices of youth, gaming included ; that obliged him to travel for some time.”<sup>1</sup>

The passion for play was so inherent in the blood of the next generation of Foxs that it would indeed be rash to assert that the poison did not run through Henry's veins. Yet we must not condemn without definite evidence ; and, whatever conjectures may be formed from youthful indiscretions, proof itself is wanting. High stakes and drunkenness, licentiousness and coarse speech, were the tokens of that age ; and it was only natural that a high-spirited young man, fresh to the temptations of society, should dip deeply into its pleasures. Yet how different is this to excess, and with excess has Henry Fox's name been coupled !

We have, it is true, insufficient material on which to found any trustworthy sketch of Fox's mode of life at that time. A few letters from his friends and relations before 1730 are preserved, but practically nothing remains from his own hand earlier than 1729, and up to 1742 we have little of importance. Yet these occasional glimpses certainly do not give the impression of an abandoned spendthrift. On the contrary, he showed himself provident and far-sighted. In 1729, he discussed by letter with Stephen, who had again gone abroad, the arrangements for their sister's marriage to Edward Digby. Difficulties might arise, it was said, owing to her elder brother's absence. Henry therefore offered to advance sufficient money to suit Charlotte's convenience, in order that she might pay for her trousseau and for other requirements. He promised to have £300 or £400 always available. Again, in 1735, writing from Nice,<sup>2</sup> he requested Stephen to invest surplus money for him. "My draughts from hence will be inconsiderable. . . . I don't see why any more of my money than is necessary for the election, should lye dead at Mr Hoare's. . . . In

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Chesterfield* (Bradshaw ed.), iii. 1426.

<sup>2</sup> January 19, 1734/35.

short, I'm willing to lose nothing ; I'm not a bit too rich."

On the other hand, there is certain evidence of money borrowed before he came of age, though the sum was only £100 ; while we obtain an interesting comparison between the temperaments of the two brothers about the same time <sup>1</sup>:

" Ste passes his time here to his satisfaction ; but he is, as I am afraid you are, very lazy in lying a bed, and makes me lye as long as himself for fear of disturbing him. But then I must needs say he is very sober and vertuous, which I hope rather than believe you are to perfection, if you will let me form my judgment from your own designs and schemes of life."

But to what does this amount ? Henry acted as other young men did and will always do. He enjoyed every moment of the new life which was opened to him. His fortune would certainly not have stood the racket of systematic high play, and there is nothing to prove that it was ever seriously depleted. Such documentary evidence as remains goes to show that the charges against him, which have been handed on from one writer to another, are exaggerated. The testimony, on both sides is meagre, it is true ; but, under the circumstances, the accused should be given the benefit of the doubt.

It has already been related how Stephen Fox went abroad at the end of 1723 to make the grand tour. With Dr Wigan he visited the Low Countries, France and Italy. He was joined by his brother in Paris during the summer of 1725. Creasy relates that Henry visited the Duchess of Portsmouth at Aubigny,<sup>2</sup> whither she had retired within a few years of Charles II's death. Her son,

<sup>1</sup> Dr J. Wigan to H. Fox, March 1724 (or 1725).

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Eminent Etonians*, p. 276. Charles II's mistress, Louise de Kéroualle, came over to England in 1670, as maid of honour to the King's sister, the Duchess of Orleans. She was subsequently created Duchess of Portsmouth,



Charles, Duke of Richmond, was the grandfather of Fox's future wife. No details of the visit are preserved.

When the brothers returned to England in October, Henry and his sister appear to have taken up their residence with Stephen, whose lifelong friendship for Lord Hervey dates from the subsequent years. The circumstances of their first meeting are unknown to us, but their mutual affection was terminated only by death, and even survived the test of the courtier's efforts in later years to decoy Fox from his allegiance to Sir Robert Walpole. Hervey's first existing letter to Stephen is dated July 17, 1727. It is couched in the language of attachment and intimacy; but their acquaintance was then probably in its early stages.<sup>1</sup> To the same period belongs Henry's connection with Thomas Winnington. Originally a Tory, the latter subsequently became a devoted follower of Walpole. In the eyes of his great patron, Winnington's versatile talents more than counterbalanced a looseness of morals in private life, and a want of equilibrium in politics. He held several posts of minor importance, and died Paymaster in 1746.

These new friends and their companions put a fresh complexion on the life of the brothers. By tradition and by family instinct the Foxs were Tories. Sir Stephen had served successive Stuart monarchs, and had always observed, with something akin to religious ceremony, the anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles. But the Tory party no longer afforded an opening to young men with ardent aspirations and ambitions for political life. It is true that Bolingbroke was still in England; it is true that Wyndham and Shippen were at the zenith of their careers. Yet the real struggle was no longer between Whig and Tory, but between Whig and Whig.

<sup>1</sup> Writing on November 20, 1742, Stephen Fox reminded Lord Hervey that their friendship had lasted fifteen years (Melbury MSS.). The bond was drawn closer by the affection of Hervey's wife, the celebrated Molly Lepell, for the two brothers. She kept up an intimate correspondence with them until her death in 1768.

Analytic discussion and searching investigation were still weapons in the hand of the Tory critic, but his powers of control over actual legislation had been reduced to a minimum. Parliamentary strife, insofar as its reality affected the welfare of the country, was becoming more and more confined to the various factions of the Whig party. Walpole, who for one short moment at the death of George I seemed tottering to his fall, took a new lease of life. Indeed, for the next ten years, his authority was never for a moment in question. He was paramount and all-powerful. But, in the end, the defects of his own character brought about his undoing. His inability to brook serious rivalry forced into opposition those whose sentiments in reality coincided with his own. Men of mark found no permanent place in his administrations. Those who should have been his lieutenants became his deadly foes; and combined weight of talent drove him at the last into voluntary retirement.

It was to Walpole's own circle that the Foxs gained admittance, for Hervey and Winnington were counted among the Minister's intimates. How probable was it, then, that their political inclinations, born of tradition rather than of conviction, should have declined and decayed in the holy of holies of successful Whiggism! Of the vigour of Stephen's ambition we have no means of judging; but it is clear that he was early won over to the doctrines of his associates. In May 1726, he was elected as Whig member for Shaftesbury, and sat without interval in the House of Commons until his elevation to the peerage in 1741.

To Henry, politics were ever a ruling passion.

"Your brother and Winnington do nothing but *politi-quer* from morning till night; I hear of nothing but petitions, journals, treaties, alliances, etc., whenever I see them. And as for Winnington (without any sort of joke), unless he will bleed, purge and keep to a very low diet, I am sure when the Parliament meets, too much



business will produce the same effect in him, wch Felix apprehended too much learning had in St Paul. Your brother and I are to play tonight after the Opera at Mr Pulteney's." <sup>1</sup>

Even before 1728 Henry had tried to obtain a seat in Parliament. We read: "H. F. employ'd in two damn'd unsuccessful elections" <sup>2</sup>; though this notice does not necessarily apply to efforts on his own behalf. He appears, at least, to have been standing in the Tory interest at his first attempt. This was probably the contest referred to by Lord Shelburne, writing many years later.

"His first connection was among the Torys. Everybody knows his origin. In 1727 he was elected for Hindon, and on a petition being preferred against him supported by Government, he made, by his activity and by his connections among the young men of fashion, such interest in the House of Commons that, to the amazement of the Minister, who looked upon it as a common petition easily carried as he should direct, he found the two first questions carried against him, and was not able to carry it at last without a very strong exertion of the power of Government." <sup>3</sup>

Horace Walpole evidently refers to the same incident in his *Memoirs of George II* <sup>4</sup>; and Lord Hervey, writing on January 15, 1730, speaks of "your Hindon antagonist, Mr Andrews." <sup>5</sup>

Fox's second venture was at Old Sarum, probably at the end of May 1728, when Thomas Harrison succeeded Thomas Pitt, Earl of Londonderry, who had been appointed to an office of profit. <sup>6</sup> Winnington wrote to

<sup>1</sup> Hervey to S. Fox, January 9, 1728.

<sup>2</sup> Melbury Gamebooks, 1727.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, ed. 1912, i. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. 80.

<sup>5</sup> Townshend Andrews sat for Hindon from 1727 till 1734.

<sup>6</sup> *Parliaments of Great Britain*.

Henry on September 29, 1728, in reference to his defeat : " It was your fortune to lose the election by one voice only, for Pytt, not suspecting any opposition, had but two voters there except ye person who voted for you." A queer contest this, and worthy of a constituency which had but seven voters and contained no house in all its sixty acres !<sup>1</sup> The plot, it seems, was not of Fox's making, for Pitt afterwards stated that he attached no blame to the defeated candidate.

Early in the autumn of 1728, Stephen again went abroad with Lord Hervey. He had been living quietly at Redlynch during the preceding winter with his sister. The taste was growing on him for the pleasures of a peaceful country life, a preference which was destined to materially influence his career and drown any desire for advancement in the public service. The health of his friend was the incentive for fresh travel. Hervey, always delicate from his youth, had been recently losing ground. Lord Bristol, Croker tells us, imputed his illness to excessive tea-drinking. Be this as it may, whether general constitutional weakness or the worries and trials of a court life were his complaint, a change of air was prescribed as the best remedy. Lady Hervey was busy with the care of four young children ; so he turned to Stephen Fox for companionship, and not in vain :

" Thy steady love, with unexampled truth,  
Forsook each gay companion of thy youth,  
Whate'er the pros'prous or the great employs,  
Bus'ness or int'rest, and love's softer joys,  
The weary steps of mis'ry to attend,  
To share distress, and make a wretch thy friend."<sup>2</sup>

Spa was their first objective, and thence they passed on to Italy. They were still in Florence in July 1729, but

<sup>1</sup> Porritt's *Unreformed House of Commons*, i. 35. Mr Thomas Pitt held the nomination of members to the borough till 1749, when he sold his interest to Frederick, Prince of Wales.

<sup>2</sup> " Lord Hervey to Mr Fox, written at Florence," *Poems* (Dodsley Collection), iii. 187.

reached home about the middle of September.<sup>1</sup> During their absence Henry was left in charge of his brother's property. We find him shooting at Redlynch, superintending the alterations to the house, and making the necessary arrangements for the welfare of the estates. Winnington was his frequent companion on these visits to the country, which were at other times extended to the houses of friends in Somerset and Dorset. He appears to have paid at least one visit to Melbury, whose owner, Mrs Strangways-Horner, was also chatelaine of Mells, a fine place in the vicinity of Redlynch, belonging to her husband's family. There also he had become a welcome guest.

Susannah Strangways-Horner was in many ways a striking personality. By the death of her sister, in 1729, she had become sole representative of the house of Strangways, a family of ancient descent, who were originally domiciled in Yorkshire. Ever since their first appearance in the south of England, early in the fifteenth century, their estates had multiplied by marriage and by purchase. They were renowned for their loyalty to the King during the Civil Wars. Indeed, they are said to have contributed to the cause over £35,000—no small sum in those days. Sir John Strangways was kept in confinement in the Tower of London for three years by the Parliamentarians, having been captured in arms at the siege of Sherborne Castle, in 1645, by Fairfax and his troops. His son, Colonel Giles Strangways, shared his imprisonment, and was made a Privy Councillor by Charles II. At Colonel Strangways's death, in 1675, the estates passed to his eldest son, John, who died the following year leaving no children. He was succeeded by his next surviving brother, Thomas, who had married, in 1664, Susanna, daughter of John Ridout. Thomas

<sup>1</sup> Hervey's *Memoirs*. Verses are preserved among the Melbury MSS., in Hervey's handwriting, relating to their travels from Florence to Lyons.

Strangways senior, as he is usually known in the family, in 1692 rebuilt a large portion of the house at Melbury, his principal residence, situated near the north-western boundaries of Dorset.<sup>1</sup> Of his large family of nine children, three only reached maturity. He died in 1713, and left the properties to his son Thomas junior, who married, in 1710, Mary, daughter of Edward Vaughan, of Langwydden, Montgomeryshire. Their union was not blessed with offspring; and, at his death in 1726, the estates were divided between his two surviving sisters, Susannah and Elizabeth. The latter, who was born in 1691, married, in 1727, James, fifth Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, and died two years later. Her share of the scattered properties thus reverted to her sister, who became sole heiress.

Susannah was born on November 28, 1689; and married, in 1713, the year of her father's death, Thomas Horner, of Mells Park, in Somerset. They were an ill-assorted pair. Her masterful and ambitious nature had little in common with that of her easy-going husband. A typical Tory gentleman of the old stamp was Horner: a true example of those who at that time formed the backbone of the party. Bluff, good-natured and hearty, he loved his fields, his neighbours and his sports: the dissipations of London had no attractions for such as he. His wife was shaped in another mould. Of ardent temperament, and favoured with no lack of personal attraction, her intelligence and activity of mind unfitted her in youth for a humdrum country life. Bickerings at home led to frequent sojourn abroad with her only surviving child, Elizabeth, whom she adored. Domineering and imperious she was, without doubt; yet her kindness of heart tempered, if it did not overcome, an asperity of

<sup>1</sup> The architect of these alterations was one Watson. His designs do not appear to have given satisfaction to some subsequent members of the family, for, during repairs in 1873, his portrait was discovered carefully walled up!



manner which was to become accentuated in later life. Her interest in the country increased with advancing years. Especially after her husband's death in 1741, she spent much of her time on her property. Her acts of benevolence and gifts in charity were numerous; for her expenditure was based on an extravagant scale. Intellectual abilities found varied resources for old age, and youthful indiscretions were forgotten in the piety and open-handed generosity of her later life.

Henry Fox seems to have made Mrs Horner's acquaintance in 1728, and at once fell under her spell. Before few years had elapsed she entrusted him with the management of much of her business, and in 1732 we find him termed her *Trustee*. By her, doubtless, he was introduced to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, one of her intimate friends. An alarming acquaintance must the Duchess have been to a youth of twenty-five. But Henry seems to have had the knack of finding favour with such arrogant dames; and was often invited to her house. On one occasion, she returned to him through her grandson, Lord Sunderland, the five guineas which he had given to her household. Such gifts, she said, were contrary to the rules of her establishment, and the servants had never done the least thing for him. On another, he stood up nobly to the old lady in defence of Sunderland, who had offended and bitterly disappointed her by his marriage. True, in the correspondence upon the subject,<sup>1</sup> "Mount Ætna," as Lord Hervey called her, had the last word; and a bitter word it was. But Fox maintained his belief in his friend's integrity, and his persistence did him no injury in the Duchess's estimation.

During the summer of 1731 Henry went abroad. He turned his steps to Spain, and thence took ship to Italy. None of the letters which describe his travels are forthcoming; and the only clue to the course of his wanderings is the indirect evidence of Lord Hervey's letters to him.

<sup>1</sup> Holland House MSS., 1732.

We hear of him at the Bay of Cadiz, in August, after a stay of some weeks in Seville. Lord Hervey dilates on his delight at his friend's descriptions of Spain, but cannot swallow the portrait he paints of the Queen. "I have so long figured her a long, lean, raw-boned tarmigan (*sic*), with a shrill voice and fierce eyes, that it is quite impossible for me to fix any other idea to her name."<sup>1</sup> He visited Gibraltar; he was reported in Parma; and in December he was staying in Rome.<sup>2</sup> His next reappearance is during the July following, in the company of Mrs Horner. The Duchess of Marlborough wrote to her: "I am sorry Mr Fox has left you, for nothing is so agreeable as to travel with a reasonable friend. I hope you will find some that you like at the Spaw, where many English are gone."

Before the middle of September he was back in England; but shooting and other amusements had insufficient charm that autumn to wean him from the attractive recollections of foreign climes. In October Lord Hervey spoke of his state of depression and contrariness:

"The days your gun snap'd oftener than it went off, I fancy your mouth did the same, as often as it open'd; and by the description you give of yourself, your luck and the weather, it is very natural to conclude your temper was as bad as the one, and your countenance as gloomy as the other."

The brothers spent Christmas at Goodwood that year. How their acquaintance with the Richmonds originated we do not know, but on this occasion it was Lady Hervey who arranged for the transfer of a previously invited party from Redlynch to Sussex. There Henry doubtless met his future bride, a schoolroom miss of ten years old. His brother Stephen at once seems to have taken his

<sup>1</sup> Hervey to H. Fox, September 13, 1731. The beauty in question was the celebrated Elizabeth Farnese, second wife of Philip V.

<sup>2</sup> His portrait by Antonio David (see Frontispiece) is signed and dated, "Roma, 1732." A pendant to this picture, the portrait of Hon. Charles Hamilton, by the same artist, also hangs at Melbury.



host's fancy and to have become a *persona grata*; for the letters which the Duke wrote to him some months later, are conceived in terms of genuine friendship and affection.

During this visit Henry received news of the death of Mr Henry Fenn, his first cousin, the last remaining life on his Receivership for South Wales. The post therefore became vacant, but he does not appear to have had much trouble in getting it renewed; for the patent, bearing date of January 19, 1733, reappointed him for the life of Richard Bateman.<sup>1</sup> By this gentleman's death in 1735 Henry was "again forc'd to ask a favour" with regard to his "Welsh place." He was then still on the Continent, although recently elected to the House of Commons. A renewal of the patent would have vacated his seat, but the difficulty was overcome by a reversionary grant taken in Stephen Fox's name.

In February 1733, we find an announcement of Henry's marriage to "Miss Dives, maid of honour to the Queen."<sup>2</sup> Miss Dyves—Penelope, as Fox's biographer, Mr Riker, christens her—was a niece of Mrs Clayton, afterwards Viscountess Sundon, a kinswoman of Mrs Strangways-Horner and a favourite at court. Mrs Clayton's father, John Dyves, was third son of Sir Lewis Dyves, who married, in 1624, Howarda Strangways, Mrs Horner's great-aunt. Penelope appears to have been a daughter of Mrs Clayton's brother John, who is elsewhere described as Colonel Dyves of Ipswich.<sup>3</sup> The whole episode is clothed in the deepest mystery. Mr Riker says that the lady died within a few years, but gives no authority for his

<sup>1</sup> *London Magazine* for 1733, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *London Magazine* for 1733, p. 98. *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1733, p. 100. *The Daily Courant* and *Daily Post* of February 28 chronicle the marriage as having taken place on the preceding evening.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Horner promised, in 1740, to pay an annuity to Lady Sundon, in consideration of a sum of money received from the latter, at whose death payment was to continue to her nieces. The names of Christiana, Grace and Charlotte Dyves appear in the receipts (Melbury MSS.). Penelope is nowhere mentioned.

statement. If the marriage took place, it is curious that in all the family papers preserved at Holland House or at Melbury there are only two references which can in any way be connected with such an alliance. Henry's brother-in-law, Edward Digby, writing in January 1733, a month before the marriage was reported, mentions to him that "your sister, Miss Charlotte Dives," was likely to be appointed maid of honour. This remark, however, could as well be taken in jest as seriously. Possibly the Duchess of Marlborough arrived at the truth, when she referred to the inaccuracy of the newspapers.

"It is in the prints (which seldom speak true), and I don't believe a word of it, that Mr Harry Fox is to be marry'd to Miss Dives, a niece of Mrs Clayton's, and a great favourite at court; and my reason is, because I think he has more sense. For Mrs Dives has lost her reputation; tho' she is ugly and can have no fortune, unless some employment obtain'd by her aunt's favour."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Henry's attachment to the lady was much talked about is clear, but it is not equally so that the match ever really took place. We find him writing on March 29, 1735, two years later, to his brother about some business transaction: "There's no need of any declaration of trust, which it will be time enough for you to give, when the only case I should ever ask in shall happen, which is (which I think more unlikely than ever Ld Pembroke or the D. of Marb.'s was) my marrying." It seems remarkable that family tradition has never breathed a single word of the matter. Both parties were closely connected with one branch or other of the present writer's family, yet no record remains in the archives of either of any such union. There is no apparent reason why the marriage should have been concealed, and any intentional removal of documents relating to it is therefore

<sup>1</sup> Duchess of Marlborough to Mrs Strangways-Horner, March 1st, 1733.

improbable. A few scanty details of Henry's life during the two subsequent years are furnished by Lord Hervey's correspondence with the brothers, and it seems unlikely that any part of this brilliant series of letters would have been wantonly destroyed. Repeated messages to Mr and Mrs Digby, Mrs Horner, etc., appear in Hervey's effusions to Henry, who was in Paris during the month of July, yet no allusion is ever made to his friend's wife.

### CHAPTER III

SINCE his departure from the University Henry had never relaxed his interest in affairs of state. Hervey and Winnington in particular fed the flame, and plied him with the details of debates and other matters of parliamentary significance. To the former he had acted as second in his duel with Pulteney early in 1731.<sup>1</sup> In 1733 his thoughts were still firmly fixed on a seat in the House of Commons, though he was willing to leave it to others to fight his battles. A general election was approaching, and by Hervey's influence with Walpole, the seat at Hindon, in Wilts, was likely to be secured. Mr Andrews, Fox's late opponent there, seemed prepared to join forces with him, now that he had changed his creed, and "fight against the common enemy," <sup>2</sup> i.e. Lord Weymouth, who, in consultation with Lord Carteret, was preparing to nominate two members. Lord Hervey had doubts about Andrews's sincerity, and warned Fox that he might be playing his own game. "In my last conference with Sr Robt I insisted on nothing but the returning officer being secured to you," says Hervey, "and what further I am to say I expect directions for from your brother and you." A characteristic comment on election procedure at the period! Fox was early receiving efficient tuition in the Whig high school of corruption!

As yet, however, he had not become sufficiently enslaved by the fascination of politics to return to England. His election was to be left to his friend and to his brother.

<sup>1</sup> Hervey's *Memoirs*, i. xxxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Hervey to H. Fox, September 13, 1733.

"Everything that I can do to secure your election at Hindon shall be done with as much diligence as if you were here to forward it yourself, and I dare answer for it your brother will act the same part in his province."<sup>1</sup> But, after all, when the time came, Henry was not put forward for the seat. He was still absent: in fact, he remained in France until the summer of 1735; and Stephen himself came forward as candidate. Lord Hervey again explains the situation. "The opposition at Shaftesbury makes Ste. fret, but I hope it will have no other ill effect. Hindon is safe."<sup>2</sup> A doubt of success caused him to stand for both constituencies. At Hindon he was successful; at Shaftesbury he failed; but his victorious opponent, Philip Bennett, did not long retain his triumph. The latter was turned out on petition, and Stephen Fox's name was substituted on February 20, 1735, as member. Here was Henry's opportunity. He was elected for his brother's vacant seat at Hindon on February 28, just ten days after his future rival, William Pitt, had been returned for the neighbouring borough of Old Sarum.

Still he dallied abroad, and the elder brother began to show signs of restiveness at the continuous work which the younger expected him to undertake on his behalf. His election had to be secured, his Receivership to be retained, yet Henry made no move towards returning home. *Cherchez la femme*, says the old adage, and it is clearly exemplified in this case. He was dawdling in Paris and at Nice in the company of Mrs Horner, who showed obvious unwillingness to let him go. He was not wasting his time, she said. "He studies very hard, and I don't know but I may make a great man of him."<sup>3</sup> Certainly her influence on his character was most beneficial. He appears during that year on the Continent

<sup>1</sup> Hervey to H. Fox, October 20, 1733.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 25, 1734.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs Strangways-Horner to S. Fox, January 23, 1735.



to have thrown off a sulky reserve, which, from Hervey's letters, had become a natural feature of his youthful disposition. Unquestionably we hear little of it in later life. Geniality and frankness were attributes which procured and retained for him a host of friends. Writing to Stephen, Hervey said :

"The Count will have the spleen ; the gloom of November and the frowardness of easterly winds will take possession of him, so that you must expect no entertainment from that quarter. Whilst you are talking to him, he will be reading, and whilst he is reading he will be thinking of something else ; by which means you will know nothing of him nor he of his book."<sup>1</sup>

Again :

"I hope you do not brag when you say you have got rid of your suspicion, your gloom, your spleen, and all the other concomitants of a foggy day and a beef diet. Take care you do not relapse, and that you come not back to England as you went from it, *homo basilicus*, which, if you will consult Littleton's Dictionary, you will find signifies a *surly Count*."<sup>2</sup>

This trait of suspicion had long been a subject of complaint with Hervey.

"If the climate you are in has cured you (as you brag) of suspicion, I have a reason more than I had, and a stronger one than all the rest, to be satisfy'd with your absence ; since it has remov'd the only thing I wish alter'd in one who had before good qualities enough to make even that supportable."<sup>3</sup>

One interesting product of Henry's sojourn at Nice is a series of letters written to his future sister-in-law. Elizabeth Strangways-Horner was at the time a child of barely twelve years old. She was living in the south of

<sup>1</sup> Hervey to S. Fox, November 7, 1732. "The Count" was a nickname by which Henry was known to his friends.

<sup>2</sup> Hervey to H. Fox, December 9, 1734.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, October 7, 1734.

France with her mother, and Henry, when in their company, seems to have taken upon himself the supervision of her education. His epistles are characteristic of the fluent language and well-turned phraseology with which his writings are always associated.

“The great pleasure I see you take in receiving letters and the great inclination I have to please you are sufficient reasons for my writing, rather than telling you by word of mouth my thoughts of your last translation. . . .”

He pointed out her mistakes and corrected her spelling. He criticised her French idioms, and expounded his ideas on the principle of correct letter writing.

“I shall divide this letter into three parts, so as to show you the meaning of the remark, where it says a letter ought to have a sort of beginning or preface, a narrative part, and a sort of ending or conclusion; but it is my opinion that this is a rule which it is sufficient to know and to have some regard to, rather than one that ought to be entirely or constantly follow’d.”

That she was an apt scholar is certain.

“I have received a prodigious pretty letter from Miss Horner, who I never doubted would in time grow to write very well; but that she would so very soon have come to such a degree of perfection I did not expect. I congratulate you upon it, Madam, with all that pleasure which you may imagine a sincere friend must have on such an occasion, and I am the more glad of it, because I dare hope you will be too wise to lose any improvement you have once gain’d, and the surest way not to lose it is to advance in it.”

But, on another occasion, her handwriting is called in question.

“I have perceiv’d, Madam, in your late writing some awkward little *e*’s. I shew’d your Mama one of them, and she says ’tis like a tad-pole or a

‘Hoddy-doddy  
All head and no body.’

If you'll be so good as to think of this whenever you write the letter *e*, it will be more of a piece with the rest of your masterly performances."

The correspondence is lengthy, but we make no apology for printing in its entirety the final letter, in which Henry closes his lectures and bids farewell to his adopted pupil. It should be read as an exposition of his ideas on life ; some of which, it may be said, he would have done well to bear in mind himself in after years.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I return you a thousand thanks for the kind acknowledgments you make me in your last obliging letter, which if I have in any degree deserv'd I am extremely glad ; but whatever my little merit towards you has been, it is I am sure much more than repaid by this voluntary and unexpected possession of your gratitude. If indeed you ow'd to me your being what you are, you could not be too grateful. But your Mama's fond care and counsel and example, join'd to your own good disposition, claim all the merit of it, and it is your goodness only that makes you mention the mite I have flung in towards that treasure of sense and goodness you are at present mistress of.

"I must not till the very last part with the privilege I have here of giving you advice, a privilege I shall resign to-morrow morning, and with much greater willingness, because you are in no immediate danger, as you have long been, of losing that Mama who can and will ever give you the best. My advice at present is, that, as you have at my suggestion us'd yourself to write down your thoughts on different subjects, you would continue that improving custom, the best advantage of which is that it will make you write and speak good English. I will not here enlarge on the other advantages it will be of to you, which I have so often enumerated to you, and you so obligingly attended to me while I did. I recommend to you to make the folly of all vice the frequent subject of this exercise. It is a copious, a various and entertaining, and a most instructive one, and if people were

not misled in this particular at their first setting out, they could never err as they do. But they think it is but to do wrong and they may enjoy worldly pleasure and reap worldly advantages of all sorts ; when in truth it is the way, almost the inevitable way, to be miserable here as well as hereafter, and to do right is the pleasantest and shortest as well as the surest road to temporary as well as eternal happiness. But, erring at first setting out so far as to think otherwise, they lay themselves open to one perpetual wrong inclination, whereas they would lean the other way, and with as much pleasure, if they from the first thought right in this. Examine this, Miss, with regard to the little particulars you were wrong in in your childhood. Were you not, even exclusive of your Mama's anger or reproof, the more unhappy for your faults ? And, after having look'd back, turn your eyes forward and round about you, and examine those faults in others which I hope and believe you will never find in yourself. You will see the covetous unhappy from those very riches which they wretchedly and uncharitably hoard or by wicked means attain. You will see the indiscreet losing their pleasures thro' those very indiscretions by which they aim at pleasure ; just as the intemperate lose their appetites by the excesses they commit to please them. My letter would be very long indeed if I carry'd this thought as far as it could go, the truth of which holds in almost ev'ry folly, ev'ry wrong one can be guilty of.

“ ‘ Accuse not nature, she has done her part,  
Do thou but thine, and be not diffident  
Of wisdom. She forsakes thee not, if thou  
Dismiss not her.’

“ But I must not conclude without telling you that I have the greatest pleasure in finding that your Mama (who you know has great penetration) thinks I judge right, when I believe that you are not at all likely to dismiss yt religious wisdom, which will for ever if you please and do's at present so happily attend you. Adieu, dear Madam, you must bid adieu to Nice and with it to my advice serious or merry ; but may ever depend on that inclination to be of any service to you, which pro-



duced it from, dear Madam, your most sincere friend and faithful humble servant,

“ H. Fox.

“ You, who know the hurry I write this in, will, I dare hope, rather wonder at the length, than be too observant of ye many faults there must be in this letter which I have not time to read over.”

Before leaving Nice Mrs Horner had commenced a correspondence with her future son-in-law. Possibly the idea of securing him for her daughter had already entered her brain. Stephen Fox, the owner of a fine house at Redlynch and other properties, was in every way a suitable match for the girl. Elizabeth's future was a constant source of anxiety to her scheming mother. The girl would have abundance of hard cash, and a desirable alliance must be found for her. It was probably not in Mrs Horner's nature to consider the wishes of her husband, and the child was too young to know her own mind. Stephen was eligible in every way: young, good-looking, well-informed, and likely to make a good husband. Elizabeth favoured him in her childish way; and he appeared not unwilling to fall into the snare.

The story of the match has been told by one of our most celebrated writers under thinly disguised names.<sup>1</sup> Fact sometimes differs from fiction; and this must be our excuse for dwelling upon the story of the marriage.

The chief obstacle with which Mrs Horner had to deal was the opposition of her husband. When the subject was first broached he evinced a strong distaste to any such suggestion. He did not personally dislike the young man, yet he felt that it was far too early for his daughter to be forced into matrimony. His gravest objection, in all probability, was Stephen's politics. The Tory squire could only regard the young Whig and his opinions with supreme disfavour. Stephen was

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hardy's *A Group of Noble Dames*.



included in that circle of Walpole's intimate friends whose morality, public and private, was continually being held up to opprobrium. He had recently been offered a post under the Government.<sup>1</sup> And, worst of all, though brought up in strict Tory principles, he had forsworn his political creed, and become a renegade from the true faith. Mr Horner was obdurate, and, as his obstinacy only increased with time, his wife, who had no intention of allowing her pet scheme to be thus frustrated, took the law into her own hands. She secretly arranged that the marriage should take place in Stephen Fox's house in Old Burlington Street,<sup>2</sup> on March 15, 1736. Mr Peter Willemin, afterwards vicar of Isey, near Cricklade (a preferment in Fox's gift), performed the ceremony, at which were present Lord Hervey, Mrs Horner, and Mrs Digby. Mrs Fox, who was only thirteen, returned home with her mother after the ceremony.

Having seen her daughter safely married, Mrs Horner began to think of her own position with regard to her deluded spouse. On March 20, she wrote to her son-in-law, saying that there was no hope of Mr Horner changing his mind at present. The latter's answer had been even less favourable than she had expected. She must, therefore, ask Fox not to attempt to approach her or Elizabeth, until circumstances had materially altered. Should that eventuality occur, she would be only too pleased to receive him again. Two enclosures, however, put a very different face on the matter. The first, a private note, explained her scheme for Stephen to elope with and remarry his newly wedded wife. This she ends : " If you don't keep your word with me, I will in earnest never pardon you. If you do, I will be your most affec-

<sup>1</sup> He had an offer to go to Ireland in 1735, as secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant designate, Lord Scarborough. The latter, however, unexpectedly refused the honour. (*Hervey's Memoirs*, i. 496.)

<sup>2</sup> No. 31. The house was erected at some date subsequent to 1722 by Lord Hervey, who sold the lease to Stephen Fox in 1730. (*Read's Weekly Journal*, October 1, 1730.)

tionate Mother." The second was the draft of a letter which she desired him to write to her, "about one o'clock the night of the enterprise." This was to contain a confession of his marriage, imploring her to intercede with Mr Horner and promising to agree to any settlements which the latter thought fit and proper. He was also to bind himself not to interfere in any way in county politics.

The second wedding, like the first, took place in Burlington Street, on March 22, "in the red damask room up one pair of stairs."<sup>1</sup> Mr Willemin again officiated, but the witnesses on this occasion were Winnington, Hon. Charles Hamilton, and Lord Falkland. Lord Hervey was present on both occasions. Mrs Horner of course was absent.

On March 28, Stephen wrote to his father-in-law, imploring his forgiveness. His affection for Elizabeth had been too strong for him, he said; and Mr Horner's refusal had made him take this drastic step. He reiterated what he had said about settlements and politics in his letter to Mrs Horner, of which, "she has not, to our grief, taken any notice!" Whether the "grim obstacle," as Mrs Fox describes her father in one of her letters, replied to this effusion, we cannot tell. But he seems to have made up his mind to the inevitable without undue delay, for on April 6 his daughter was arranging for herself and her husband to meet at his house, and "eat a bit" with him any day which was convenient. Mr Horner had his way with respect to his child's tender age. All intercourse between husband and wife was forbidden for several years. During this period of separation Mrs Fox's letters breathe the deepest affection and a continual longing for the day which would again bring them together. Occasionally they met, by the connivance of Mrs Horner, at Redlynch and elsewhere, when the squire was safely out of the way. For three

<sup>1</sup> The first had taken place in the "library." (Melbury MSS.)



MRS STRANGWAYS-HORNER,

By Sir G. Kneller.



years they remained apart, and not till August 11, 1739, did his child-wife join Stephen at Redlynch.<sup>1</sup> Never did a marriage which courted calamity and failure achieve more successful result. Mutual love and understanding brought in their train all the blessings of true happiness.

We have more than once already had occasion to refer to the entries in the Melbury Game Books. These consist of a series of volumes, containing an interesting and amusing record of the doings of the Foxs and their intimate friends, in addition to a detailed account of their daily sport. The diaries form a chronicle of the movements of various members of the family, and of the arrival and departure of honoured guests, interspersed with anecdotes of special interest; and furnish us with a characteristic study of country life in that period. Though now at Melbury, these *Mémoires de la chasse* refer exclusively to the Fox properties of Redlynch, Farley and Maddington. Redlynch, as we have seen, is situated in the eastern portion of Somerset, near the small town of Bruton. Farley, Sir Stephen Fox's birthplace, lies to the south-east of Salisbury; and Maddington is to be found on Salisbury Plain, a few miles to the west of Stonehenge.

In this latter village Stephen Fox established himself in September 1727. We may conclude that his quarters were neither capacious nor his furniture of an expensive make, for the first entry in the book reads:

" Mr Carey <sup>2</sup>	.	.	} in one bed.
Mr Winnington.	.	.	
Dr Wigan.	.	.	} in one bed.
Ste Fox	.	.	

There were but 2 beds in all, and those very bad ones."

From this humble abode, however, the sportsmen were able to range over the whole of the western side of the

<sup>1</sup> Melbury Game Books.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Lord Falkland.



Plain, from Upavon and even beyond the river Avon on the north-east to the hills south of the Wily and up the valley almost to Heytesbury. They seem to have shot at will over that wide district. No detailed figures of the sport obtained were kept until the autumn of 1736. We are told in 1733 that S. Fox, "alone the 1st day kill'd 19 partridges"; and that 315 was the total for the year 1734 at Redlynch and Maddington.

Sport in the eighteenth century had none of the obtrusive luxury of recent years. Game was scarce and difficult to bring to bag. The enthusiast thought nothing of scouring the fields all day without firing a shot; and, under any circumstances, it was no disgrace to return empty-handed. Guns were heavy and clumsy; consequently accurate marksmanship was difficult. Yet the comparative degree of excellence to which the crack shot of that period attained was extraordinary. The modern system of *battues* was unknown. One sportsman alone, or two together, usually on horseback, would range the stubbles and grasslands with pointers, for partridges and quail; and later in the season spaniels were employed in covert, in thicket and in coppice, to flush the pheasant or the woodcock. An occasional hare, rabbit or snipe made up the day's total. How would the sportsman of George II's reign, revelling in the delights of nature and enjoying the triumphs of his own prowess, have commented on the serried array of keepers and beaters of the twentieth century? What would he have thought of all the paraphernalia of a modern shooting-party? In truth, he would be inclined to say that sport had deteriorated since his day. And probably he would be right.

Shooting was Henry Fox's favourite pastime in the country; hunting had no charms for him. He appears to have been a fair shot, though his bag for the day was seldom as large as that of his brother. But, as Stephen was an exceptionally brilliant performer with

the gun, the comparison 'is perhaps unfair. Charles Hamilton, in writing to the latter, contrasts them thus : " I heartily condole with both you and the Count, for, as far as I find, he shoots too ill, and you too well, to take any pleasure in it." Indeed, at his best, Stephen must have ranked high in any company. We hear of him killing twenty-two partridges, one pheasant and a wild duck, without missing a shot—no mean feat even in these days. Sam Hill,<sup>1</sup> a devoted friend of the family, writing in 1731, said, " Your brother is grown a tip-top shooter ; he seldom misses. . . . It is all one to him whether he rides or walks."

Stephen was out all day and every day, in wet weather or in fine. Henry was more particular about his comforts, and was less inured by habit to rough weather. Yet he was seldom absent from a good day's sport during his stay in the country, and he enjoyed it to the full.

In the autumn of 1736, a careful record of daily incidents and achievements was commenced. The entries, usually of daily occurrence, are, during the first few years, almost entirely in Henry Fox's handwriting. He is styled " Recorder " ; but later on, when he had less leisure for country pursuits, the diary was kept by Stephen and others. The majority of the extracts which we present to the reader are from his pen.

On September 1, S. Fox, H. Fox and Samuel Hill arrived at Maddington from Redlynch. Sport with the partridges was good that year. Forty brace were killed by the party in the first seven days' shooting. It is recorded, on the 12th, that Stephen weighed a fraction over 9 stone, Henry exactly 12 stone.

" *September 13.*—Stapleford, Little Langford, Wily, Codford, Bapton, Stockton, Codford, Fisherton. The farmer told us it would be a brown day : it was a very melancholy one. We saw but 4 birds. Mr S. Fox shot

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Samuel Hill, subsequently Canon of Wells.

twice.<sup>1</sup> Mr H. Fox did not let off his gun. Mr Hill was out hunting. Killed one hare."

On the next day there was a catastrophe.

"Lavington, Eascot, Ushent, Weddington, Cheston, Red Hone, Black Heath. Game very scarce. H. Fox going to shoot at a partridge, his gun went off before he got it to his shoulder, and he wounded Chloe, a very good bitch, but (thank God) she recover'd, and is very well. Mem.: H. Fox will never carry his gun cock'd again."

September 20 is a quaint record of a day in a wood, where of recent years hundreds of pheasants have been killed to every one at that period.

"*Grovely*.<sup>2</sup>—Very fine weather. Kill'd ev'ry pheasant we saw. Killed by S. Fox 2 pheasants. By H. Fox 3 pheasants, 1 partridge. One of the pheasants shot by S. Fox could not be found, tho' it fell immediately and was seen to fall by six people, perch'd on six several trees, after the example of Mr Willemin. The said Willemin got so far into thick wood, that without assistance and some branches being cut for him, he would never have got out. S. Fox kill'd both pheasants on horseback. Mr H. Fox kill'd the partridge on horseback likewise.

"*September 21*.—Ablington, Sislecot and the pennings beyond towards Everley. Shooting very fine weather. Kill'd by S. Fox, 8 partridges. By H. Fox, 2. One of those kill'd by H. Fox was wing'd, ran into a hedge, and is the third that has been so lost this season."

On October 3, the brothers and Willemin returned to Redlynch; the total bag of partridges being 155, of which S. Fox had killed 101, H. Fox 43. Twenty-seven pheasants had also been bagged. The absence of both brothers at Melbury and in London limited their sport in October and November.

<sup>1</sup> "Kill'd by S. Fox, 2 partridges."

<sup>2</sup> A large wood near Wilton.

"Dec. 3.—Bad weather. Bad sport. Kill'd by S. Fox, 1 woodcock. By H. Fox, 1 partridge. The partridge kill'd by H. Fox fell in a short, thick fuz, where it could not have run, yet it could not be found, wch so provok'd H. Fox that, resolving to have it, he sent for a man to cut down the fuz, and by that means found it.

"December 6.—Very bad weather. Snow falling ev'ry half hour. S. Fox, keen but rash, went out. H. Fox, less brave but more prudent, stay'd at home. Kill'd by S. Fox, 2 woodcock."

Winnington arrived on the 26th.

"Jan. 6.—Mr Winnington went snipe shooting in the park, kill'd 3. Mr Foxs and Mr Cheek<sup>1</sup> *à la grande chasse*. Kill'd by S. Fox, 5 woodcock. By H. Fox, 2. One hit by both, but from whom he received his death's wound is uncertain. By H. Fox, a hare; by S. Fox, a snipe; by Mr Cheek, *nothing*."

The party left for London on January 10. 417 "pieces" was the bag for the season.

The records of 1737 and 1738 contain little of special interest. Hervey, Winnington and Marlborough<sup>2</sup> were the guests at Maddington in the latter year. We may, however, select a few characteristic entries.

"Maddington. September 27, 1737.—Sislecot, Ablington, Alton, Enford. S. Fox shot 4 partridges at one shot. 3 fell immediately, the 4th tour'd at some distance, and fell dead in the river. A horseman, who was then passing the river, brought it to my br., who desir'd him to accept of it, wch he did."

"1738. August 28.—Apprehensions of rain.

Kill'd by S. Fox . . . . 13 Partridges.

„ by H. Fox . . . . 13 „

Kill'd, but whether by S. Fox or

H. Fox we could not possibly

recollect. . . . . I „ ”

<sup>1</sup> A neighbour and intimate acquaintance.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Spencer, third Duke of Marlborough.



" *September 29.*—S. Fox went shooting from Maddington to Farley. Kill'd 1 partridge. This day, a dog pointing a partridge, another partridge came and lighted between the dog and the partridge, within a foot of the dog's nose. The dog stood steadily."

" *October 7, Farley.*—Kill'd by S. Fox, 2 pheasants, one of them so very large and exceedingly beautiful that he was called the *Glory of the Woods*. A yard and an inch long."

In 1739 Henry joined his brother and sister-in-law at Redlynch in August, soon after their enforced separation had come to an end. To the subsequent removal of the whole party to Maddington, there appears a sarcastic allusion in the handwriting of Sam Hill.

" *September 6th.*—Rain till near one, after that a little windy but fair. However we did not go out—first fruits of women coming to Maddington."

" *October 3.*—H. Fox set out for Bath to make Ld Hervey a visit of 2 or 3 days there. S. Fox and Mr Hill set out for Farley to shoot pheasants. Kill'd in his way to Farley, by S. Fox, 3 partridges, 1 quail.

Memorandum: Mr H. Fox a great boaster of his shooting. S. Fox made such a shot that H. Fox could not, nor ever will."

No incident in 1740 need be recounted; but in the following year three visits of Henry Fox to Hanbury-Williams at Bath are mentioned. Winnington as usual came for a long stay.

" *September 4, 1741, Maddington.*—Memn: Ld Ilch.<sup>1</sup> lays H.F. 2 Gs to 1 that the old Dss of M. is not alive the 4 of Sept<sup>r</sup> 1745.<sup>2</sup>

" Mr Hill having a very vile caxon, not fit to dine with good company in, Mr H. Fox made him a present of a very noble peruke, very much admir'd."

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Fox was created Lord Ilchester in May 1741.

<sup>2</sup> She died in October 1744.



More innuendoes about Henry's shooting are to be observed this year.

"September 10.—Memorandum: Mr Fox had ye fairest shot at a young leveret and miss'd it, tho' he pretends that he never misses."

"September 14.—Bulford Leases. Mr Hill was so rash as to lay Mr H. Fox a wager that he did not kill 3 out of the first 8 shots he made, and he lost it in the first 4 shots. It is believ'd he won't lay any more wagers with that *excellent* shooter."

The dogs were not always as well behaved as in the episode recently recorded.

"September 30, Farley.—Memorandum: The dogs after two flights caught a fine old cock pheasant in Hancock's coppice, and eat it all up but the two legs."

Indeed, there seem to have been numerous disasters of this kind!

One of the earliest entries in 1742 was on September 1, in Henry's own hand.

"Mem.: H. Fox set out from London at 7 o'clock in the evening, Augst 31st, came to Maddington, Septr 1st, at ten in the morning, and without going to bed went out a shooting the whole day. *Ah! Que cela est alert!*

" By Lord Ilchester . . . .	4 Partridges.
by H. Fox . . . .	6     "
by the dogs . . . .	1     "

Winnington arrived a few days later, and shortly afterwards Mr Hanbury-Williams and Mr G. Hanbury.

In the autumn of 1743 Henry Fox went farther afield.

"Mr Henry Fox, galloping about the country, sometimes to one place and sometimes to another, made an excursion into Wales, where he shew'd himself a true shot, having kill'd in Cardiganshire between eight and

eleven in the morning ten grouse, and shot but eleven times. In the afternoon he kill'd seven more and brought them all to Redlinch. Return'd to Redlinch, Augt 1st."

Winnington and Hanbury-Williams joined the party in September. Henry left for London with the latter on September 30, and appears no more in the records of that year.

Two days after his departure a tale of woe unfolds itself. The entry is in Ilchester's handwriting.

"October 4.—Clarendon Park.<sup>1</sup> *Dies Infelix. Chasse malheureuse, pleine d'accidens sinistres. Tout m'afflige et me nuit et conspire à me nuire.* Memorandum: Besides the game brought home, 4 noble cock pheasants were kill'd and not brought home. One was lost by the ingenuity of Mr Crane (Mr Hill's footboy), which was shot by Mr Hill upon his young mare; who after it was shot took it up, brought it 2 hundred yards, let it go out of his hands, and it was lost in the furze. Another was shot, caught by the dogs, but never found by the gamekeepers. Two more fell instantly, but never could be taken up."

On September 4, 1744, Henry's newly wedded wife, Lady Caroline, paid her first visit to Maddington with her husband. Hanbury-Williams arrived at the same time. The house there, probably a far more capacious dwelling than the original lodging, had been burnt down in November 1741, but was rebuilt by the following autumn. Quite a party this year, "Lady Ilchester, pink and white pussy cat, Mrs Digby and Neddy,"<sup>2</sup> had joined Lord Ilchester on the 3rd, and Winnington came a few days later.

"Sep. 11.—Mr Henry Digby,<sup>3</sup> a very pretty young

<sup>1</sup> The seat of Mr Bathurst, near Salisbury.

<sup>2</sup> Neddy Digby, Lord Ilchester's nephew, afterwards sixth Lord Digby. He had shot his first partridge on August 19.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Digby, Neddy's younger brother, aged thirteen, who succeeded him in the title.

gentleman for marking, arrived here this night from Sherborne.

"Mem.: Ld Ilchester offer'd the said Henry half a guinea, if he would repeat fifty lines in Ovid without missing once, which he did to the great satisfaction of the whole company. Mr Hill was so sprightly, there was no such thing as making him sit down."

"*September 18.*—Roleston and Maddington Pennings. By Ld Ilch., 8 partridges; by H. Fox, 7; by Neddy, 2; double shot H.F. and N., 1. Stormy afternoon.

"Lady Caroline's chaise this day started a hare, while she was driving out to see my Lord shoot. It ran a great way, and afforded much diversion to the company; and was at last kill'd by the greyhounds.

"Mem.: Charles Williams got out of the chaise and shot at a partridge in Roleston Penning, and the feathers were seen to come off very thick.

"Mr Hill rode out all day without any skin on his buttocks, and at night was in a damn'd passion with Sr Charles.

"*September 19.*—Mr Canon Hill wrote the Records fair all day with two diachilon plaisters.

"*September 27.*—Miss Susan Fox<sup>1</sup> went to Redlynch, allow'd by all, partial and impartial, to be the loveliest, liveliest and best humour'd child that ever was yet born.

"One partridge, suppos'd to have been miss'd, rose, flew over a hedge, settled on Ld Ilchester's horse's back, then flew round and round, two or three yards at a time, till Ld Ilchester catch'd it."

"*November 21, Redlynch.*—Memorandum: My Ld Ilchester missed eleven woodcocks following. Having been a good cock shooter, he is now become a very bad one."

We find little of note in the records of 1745, although the Pretender's invasion of the northern portions of the country, to which constant allusions are made, does not seem to have affected sport in the western counties.

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Susannah Sarah Louisa Fox, eldest daughter of Lord and Lady Ilchester, born in February 1743. [These entries are all in Henry Fox's handwriting.]

"It was the worst year for partridge that ever was known," yet Ilchester had 200 woodcock to his own gun between November and February 10, 1746. Henry Fox was more busily employed in London.

"*Sept. 20, Maddington.*—Mem.: There being a rebellion in Scotland, Mr Winnington could not come this year."

"Memorandum: Neddy Digby is barely 15 years of age, a sweet youth, and shoots better than anyone of his age at present in England."

By the following autumn Henry Fox had taken upon himself serious official responsibilities.

"*September 1.*—Mem.: The Rt Honble Henry Fox, Secretary-at-War and one of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, is so much taken up in superintending courts-martial etc., etc., that he cannot come this year.

"Mem.: 'Tis thought the said Henry Fox, etc., is almost spoilt for a shooter."

His absence, however, did not curb Ilchester's activity and that of his nephew Neddy, who were out all day and in all weathers.

"*October 3, Farley.*—Easton hedgerow and wood. A cold blustering day.

"Mem.: A pheasant rose very near both Ld Ilchester and Young Digby, who seeing it to be a hen would not shoot at it. Before it had flown 30 yards, it hit its head against a little beech tree, and fell down. It was taken up alive, but the blow was so violent that it could not live many hours."

"*October 9.*—Grovely Wood. Kill'd

by Ld Ilchester	.	.	.	{ 1 Pheasant.
				{ 1 Leverett.
Young Digby	:	.	.	1 Woodcock.
Double shot	.	.	.	1 Woodcock.



"Mem.: It was a mighty particular pheasant that Ld Ilchester kill'd. It was agreed to be an old one, but there were great disputes whether it was a cock or hen. It was green about the head like a cock, but had no red about its eyes. His breast was of a reddish colour, but very unlike the breast of a cock pheasant. Its back and hinder parts were like a hen, and it had no spurs upon its legs. Its train also was exactly like a hen."

The records for 1747 commence with the following entry :

"All this page is left blank for encomiums on Henry Thomas Fox,<sup>1</sup> who was born the 29th of July, 1747, and baptiz'd the 26th of August by Mr Canon Hill, who went to London for that purpose, and came back in a great hurry to be at Wells Races."

Ld Ilchester did not go this year to Maddington, "for several good reasons, one of which Mr Fox having a nasty fever." On his sixth shooting day at Redlynch, Ilchester's gun burst in his hand, causing it severe injury, and bringing his season to a premature close.

Lord Ilchester and Mr Digby arrived at Maddington on September 13, 1748, to meet Lady Caroline and Mr Fox, "and heard very bad news as to their future sport." A sad disappointment this! For Henry was looking forward to a pleasant holiday.

"Mr Calcraft lends me a horse, and that and my grey will both be there on Monday night, to rest Tuesday; and after that if you'll show me birds, I shall for 8 or 10 days work both birds and horses most extravagantly."<sup>2</sup>

"Sept. 15.—Enford, Chisenbury. Sad sport. Kill'd by H. Fox, 1 partridge. By E. Digby, 1.

"Ld Ilchester never fir'd his gun, and there was no partridge miss'd this day by anybody."

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards second Earl of Ilchester.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, September 8, 1748.



The Foxs went off a week later to Goodwood, and Ilchester moved to Farley.

"*Sept. 24.*—Easton Hedgerows, etc. Kill'd by Lord Ilchester 4 c. pheasants and 1 heathpoult.

"*Mem.* : The first heathpoult ever seen or heard of in this country."

In September of the following year, Henry Fox arrived at Redlynch about the first of the month.

"*August 27.*—*Mem.* : Mr Hill preach'd against lying, a most excellent sermon, in which he said that most of the articles in the newspapers relating to foreign affairs were false."

On the 10th, the party, which included Henry Digby and "Jack, alias Ld William, alias Sportly, alias Vermin, alias Beau Calcraft, alias Squire Calcraft of the Grange, alias Mr John Calcraft,"<sup>1</sup> "heard as usual from the farmer that there were plenty of birds, from the game-keeper that there were very few."

The latter's version was unfortunately correct.

"The worst Maddington season Mr H. Fox ever saw, who despairs of ever seeing a good one.

" ' Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium et alba  
Regia Dardanidum.'

"*Sept. 19.*—*Mem.* : On Sunday last, Mr Hill, preaching in the Abbey Church at Bath, in his sermon had these words. 'Some men make themselves eunuchs to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven This is not necessary ; living in a state of celibacy is not the way to felicity.'

"*N.B.*—Mr Canon Hill's sermon was the occasion of much giggling among the girls, which is suppos'd to be in a great measure owing to the young ladys guessing what it was the Parson must mean by felicity.

"But where are the men that make themselves eunuchs to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven ?"

<sup>1</sup> All these entries are in H. Fox's writing.

On September 9, 1750, Henry Fox arrived at Maddington with Calcraft. The former "had been 2 days most graciously and most agreeably receiv'd and entertain'd by H.R.H. the Duke,<sup>1</sup> at Windsor."

"Kill'd by H. Fox at the Great Lodge at Windsor on Sept. 8th, 3 partridges, besides double shots, which are most frequent there: 5 generally or 6 firing at a time.

"Mem.: H.R.H. the Duke gave Mr Secretary a pretty horse.

"Sept. 10.—N.B. Mr Calcraft as bad, that is as insipid a companion a shooting as he is clever in all other things. The farmer says Mr Calcraft is best for hunting and coursing."

This year Henry Fox paid his brother a second visit, in December, at Redlynch. During his stay we find an entry:

"Dec. 12.—West End Coppice. Kill'd by Mr Calcraft, a 3d part of a partridge; by the Secretary, a 3d of a partridge; by Ld Ilchester, a 3d of a partridge. By the Secretary, a hen pheasant, 1 woodcock. By Dick Cox,<sup>2</sup> 1 woodcock.

"Mem.: The hen pheasant which the Secretary kill'd this day is the only one that has been shot by the Redlynch shooters these several years, my Lord preserving the pheasants in Somersetshire."

The spring and summer of 1751 were "the wettest ever known in England, and many hundreds of young pheasants and partridges were destroy'd by the rains."

On October 9, we are told that Lady Ilchester set out for London "in order to be brought to bed of one or two sons."<sup>3</sup> Lord Ilchester moved to Farley next day, "having turn'd loose 34 partridges at Maddington."

"October 15.—Mr Digby shot so well that Dick Cox said his gun was enchanted.

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Cumberland

<sup>2</sup> The gamekeeper.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Strangways Digby Fox was born on November 26.

"October 17.—Killed by Mr Digby, 2 large young pheasants. By Ld Ilchester, 1 noble old cock pheasant, sitting in a beech tree.

"Memorandum: This is the first pheasant ever shot perched in this country by Ld Ilchester."

On October 1, 1752, Henry Fox and Calcraft arrived at Maddington from Bath. The next day was cold and cloudy. The party went out shooting.. "Mr Calcraft always tender, but grown more than ever sensible to cold, went home by noon."

October 5 was an unlucky day, notwithstanding the advent of a new recruit.

"Weddington Farm. Chisenbury. *The Sportsman Redivivus*; or, *Hamilton*<sup>1</sup> has begun shooting again, after 22 years intermission. N.B.—He is older than Mr Fox.

"Kill'd by Ld Ilchester, 1 quail. By *Redivivus*, 1 quail. Lord Ilchester, Mr Fox, Mr Hamilton did not shoot at one partridge. Mr Fox did not let off his gun. Mr Digby and Mr Hamilton shot at one partridge, and miss'd it.

"No one partridge was brought home,—a thing not to be parallel'd in these records, nor to be believ'd by posterity."

On the 9th we find the pleasanter side of the picture.

"Bulford Leases, Sprack Pennings and Sislecot Hams. How many partridges saw this morning's sun,  
Whose eyes e'er evening shall in death be clos'd?

*Answer.* Vide below.

"Mem.: Mr Hamilton shot but 6 times, and kill'd 5.

"Kill'd by *Redivivus* Hamilton, 5 partridges. By Lord Ilchester, 4. By Mr Digby, 4. By Mr Fox, 3. By dogs, 1, and 1 quail."

On the 13th, "Mr Fox shot surprisingly [his bag was

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Charles Hamilton, youngest son of James, sixth Earl of Abercorn, a noted authority in later life on gardening and arboriculture. His full-length portrait hangs at Melbury.

2 partridges], for he shot ill this year." Next day he left for Bath.

During September 1753 we find a long entry in Henry Fox's handwriting.

"21st, *Maddington*.—This day H. Fox, Secry at War, etc., etc., resign'd his place of Recorder of the *Chasse* here into the worthy hands of the Rt Honble Edward, Lord Digby,<sup>1</sup> of Geashill, having first lamented the death of poor Hill,<sup>2</sup> who dy'd at Bath, the 2d day of January last, of the gout, and of whom too much has been said in these records to make it necessary to say anything more of his character or our concern for the loss of him.

#### MOTIVES OF MR FOX'S RESIGNATION

"The great honour he enjoys of being H. Steward of the Borough of Malmesbury makes it necessary for him to be at Malmesbury on ev'ry Michaelmas Day, which as the Style<sup>3</sup> is altered, cuts him off in the middle of his shooting, and incapacitates him from performing the functions of this office for above half of the due time.

"2ly. He has nothing good to record of himself of late.

"3ly. He grows old and fat, and Lord Digby is young and clever. Into whose hands he resigns his book."

From this date forward Fox wrote but little in the *Mémoires*. They have already carried us far beyond the period of his life with which we are now dealing; and with him we shall now take leave of them.

<sup>1</sup> The aforementioned "Neddy," who had succeeded his grandfather as Lord Digby in 1752.

<sup>2</sup> Canon S. Hill.

<sup>3</sup> The Calendar had been changed

## CHAPTER IV

As Henry did not reappear in England until after the close of the session of 1735, he was unable to take his seat in the Commons until the following January. His introduction to that august assembly was coincident with the occasion of his eldest brother's first recorded speech. Stephen Fox moved the address in reply to the King's Speech on January 15, his friend Hanbury-Williams seconding. The motion was carried, "not only without a division, but without the smallest opposition."<sup>1</sup> Hervey was acting as mentor to the brothers, and their seats in Parliament were due to his influence with Walpole. Stephen, in his position of a wealthy landed proprietor, could look for recognition; but Henry had no such face value, and had yet to win his spurs in the arena of politics. With the latter, Hervey's correspondence at this time is of special interest. Several letters, in Latin, passed between them in 1735, discussing parliamentary debates and like questions<sup>2</sup>: while others, couched in their own mother-tongue, ranged over the wider field of ethics and literature, not omitting the daily round of court gossip. Montesquieu's recent work<sup>3</sup> was a favourite theme at the end of 1734.

"I like most of your reflexions on Montesquieu's book extremely, but when you say you found no obscurity in him, I think you compliment your own apprehension more than his perspicuity. At least, for my own sake I am determin'd to think so, since there are many things

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*.

<sup>2</sup> Holland House MSS.

<sup>3</sup> *Causes de la grandeur et de la décadence des Romains*.



in him too dark for me to discover. And therefore I will believe you understand him much quicker than most other people, and not that I understand him much slower.”<sup>1</sup>

Copies of verses, handed backwards and forwards from one to the other, were a fertile field for debate; and the respective merits of the compositions and their authors led to divers discussions. Unfortunately, Fox's opinions and reasoning can only be judged second-hand through the medium of his friend's remarks. His own letters to Hervey are not forthcoming, and there is strong presumption for the belief that they are no longer in existence.

When Henry Fox first made his appearance in the Commons Walpole's power was beginning to wane. To the outward eye his position was as firm as it had been for the past fifteen years. His authority was undiminished, and his weight with the King, assisted by Queen Caroline's influence, was sufficiently powerful to carry through his own policy, regardless of the monarch's personal desires. Yet the cloud in the sky had grown larger than a man's hand. The collection of Whig malcontents was increasing every year, swelled by the number of those whom the Minister himself had driven from the party. Their accession brought immeasurable vigour to the Tory Opposition. The latter party was divided into two distinct sections—the out-and-out Jacobites, and the element who disagreed with Whig aspirations, while favouring the Hanoverian succession. It was the object of the Government to class the whole as supporters of the Stuarts, but in reality the country members, who formed the larger majority, had no real wish to see a restoration of the Catholic line. Behind them stood Bolingbroke, who had long ago foreseen the trend of sentiment in England, and had shaped his plans accordingly. From his inability to sit in either

<sup>1</sup> Hervey to H. Fox, December 18, 1734.

House of Parliament,<sup>1</sup> he was precluded from active participation in political life, but his experience and the ability of his masterful pen were of inestimable value to his side.

Pulteney and Carteret were the originators of this new Whig faction, which soon attracted to its standard a stream of recruits. Chesterfield, Clinton and Burlington, dismissed for their antagonism to the Excise scheme, joined its ranks in 1733; and a few months later came Bolton, Marchmont, Stair and Cobham, the latter soon to become leader of the "Boy Patriots"—that muster of surpassing genius, the Grenvilles, William Pitt and George Lyttelton. A further accession brought strength and assistance to their cause. Frederick, Prince of Wales, following the tradition of the Hanoverian line, threw himself whole-heartedly into the task of thwarting the measures of his father, at whose hands he considered that he had received nothing but ill-treatment and injustice.

But it was not only by parliamentary talent and aristocratic influence that the Opposition, disunited in policy but firmly connected by one common bond of hatred for the Minister, was formidable. They could command the services of almost every political writer of note; for to attach literary talent to his cause had never been Walpole's plan. Thus it was easy, by pamphlets and by satires, by lampoons and by caricatures, to let loose upon the country a torrent of scurrility and opprobrium. This, by its very weight, was calculated to undermine his popularity, and to poison the minds of the masses against his measures. Sir Robert was not the man to be affected by trivialities of this kind, for such he considered them. No Government ever made less use of the law of libel. Prosecutions on that score were rare during his Ministry, though never was there more reasonable provocation.

<sup>1</sup> The reversal of Bolingbroke's attainder only extended to the return of his property, though he made constant efforts to obtain a full restoration of rights as long as George I was alive.

What mattered to him such pin-pricks as popular abuse, so long as he ruled supreme in Parliament? And to this end was all his attention directed. The secret of his success was his wholesome respect for popular feeling. As in the case of "Wood's halfpence," he gave way before the storm which arose in the country after the introduction of his Excise scheme. He withdrew the bill, though he well knew that he was right and that his opponents had misrepresented his measure. The temptation to him to force his favourite project upon the country must have been great. Parliament in those days did not represent the voice of the people, and was wholly subservient to the Minister's authority. He had only to lift his finger, and the bill would have passed. Yet he stayed his hand, for he realised the inestimable value of discretion, and foresaw that a momentary triumph might be the means of wresting from him for ever that power which he loved so well.

For twenty years Sir Robert ruled the House of Commons with a rod of iron. Systematic corruption was the primary weapon with which he effected his purpose. Bribery had become a parliamentary institution. Bare-faced speculation had thriven ever since the Restoration, and had become a recognised factor in politics. It was left to Walpole to convert such methods into a system. By the expenditure of secret-service money, by places and peerages to owners of boroughs, and by the extension of royal patronage, he secured a lasting majority which was always at his beck and call. Thus it was that the election of 1734 left the balance of parties in the Commons much as they were in the preceding Parliament, notwithstanding the fact that the clamour against Excise had been fully kept alive by Bolingbroke and his fellow scribes. The former, disappointed and disgusted, left for the Continent early in the subsequent year, and did not return until after Walpole's death.

In Britain's relations with foreign powers Walpole's

trump card—peace with honour—had been recently played with excellent effect. The death of Augustus II, King of Poland, early in 1733, had thrown Europe into a ferment. France was driven to support Stanislaus, the former King, and father of the French Queen. The binding clauses of the “Family Compact” forced Spain to support the same cause. The Emperor Charles VI, on the other hand, championed the claims of Frederick Augustus II of Saxony, who finally succeeded as Augustus III. The States of Germany took up cudgels on his behalf. Hanover was of necessity drawn into the quarrel; and as George and his Secretary of State, Harrington, were itching to take part in the fray, it seemed certain that England would be implicated. Yet Walpole stood firm, and gained the day. He realised what war would mean to this country, which had reaped incalculable benefit from his policy of tranquillity and non-interference. The Emperor might supplicate for assistance, he might cajole, he might finally plot the removal of the Minister: yet all in vain. Great Britain remained an interested spectator of the contest, and by her neutrality facilitated an adjustment of the succession. Preliminaries of peace were signed at Vienna in 1735. Stanislaus was bought off with Lorraine, which at his death was to pass to France. Well might Walpole boast to the Queen in 1734, “Madam, there are fifty thousand men slain this year in Europe, and not one Englishman.”

No speech from Henry Fox is recorded in 1736, a session which is remarkable for the maiden effort of William Pitt. The occasion was a congratulatory address to the Prince of Wales on his marriage with Augusta, daughter of Frederick, Duke of Saxe-Gotha. His words were offensive to the court, and occasioned his removal from his cornetcy of dragoons. That year was an era of disturbance in the country; rioting was prevalent in many parts. The “Gin Act,” a bill introduced by the Master of the Rolls, Sir Joseph Jekyll, passed unsupported



by Walpole, who foresaw that its severity was likely to defeat its own ends. It was most unpopular among the lower classes, and led to some commotions. In Edinburgh arose a tumult, which gained an insalubrious notoriety.

At the execution of a smuggler, John Porteous the captain of the city guard, ordered his men, under strong provocation, to fire into the crowd, killing and wounding several persons. As he had omitted to read the Riot Act, he was tried for murder and sentenced to death. Hearing that he had been respited, the mob broke into the Tolbooth, where he was confined, and hanged him. The matter was discussed in Parliament early in the session of 1737, on a motion by Lord Carteret to enquire into the particulars of the riot. Subsequently a Bill of Pains and Penalties against the Provost and City of Edinburgh, "for conniving at, or not preventing, the perpetration of so atrocious a deed,"<sup>1</sup> was introduced into the Lords, and passed through that House. It received a second reading in the Commons, but at Walpole's instance the measure was drastically amended in Committee. The Provost was to be incapacitated from holding office, and a fine of £2,000 imposed on the Corporation. In this form the bill received the royal assent, and the fine was handed over to Porteous's widow.

Henry Fox spoke on June 9, in the debate upon the second reading. Beyond the fact that it was his first reported speech, there is little in his actual remarks to attract special attention. His words were full of sound common sense. Yet the tone of his remarks had a far-reaching effect upon his future career. The Scots never forgave his words; and to his dying day he had to reckon with the hatred and suspicion of those who belonged to the northern nation. He expressed his abhorrence of the murder, and gave his opinion in favour of the bill. No such outrage, he said, could have been committed unless the majority of the onlookers had been in league

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, x. 187.



with the conspirators ; and if, as had been stated, the crowd was largely composed of country-folk, the magistrates should have been forewarned by the arrival of such a concourse, and have been prepared to cope with any consequent disorder. He was urgent for punishment ; and refused to allow his opinions to be influenced by the threat of Scottish resentment. He instanced a fine imposed on the city of Glasgow twelve years before, to emphasise the probable imputation of favouritism, should Edinburgh be too lightly dealt with upon the present occasion.

During the month of February Fox had an opportunity of bringing himself personally under Walpole's notice, and of proving the value of his powers of observation. The Prince of Wales, ever since his marriage, had been cavilling at the annual allowance of £50,000 given to him by his father. He demanded double that sum as his right, and, egged on by certain younger members of his *entourage*, proposed to lay his claim before Parliament. To carry the point, his agents proceeded surreptitiously to canvass the members of the House of Commons for their votes. Among others the Foxs were approached. Henry guardedly told the Duke of Marlborough, who mentioned the matter to him, that he should be guided by his brother, and rushed off to Lord Hervey with the news. The latter, astounded at the unexpected intelligence, informed the Queen, who had never believed that her son would proceed to such lengths. Thus forewarned, Walpole and the court were able to take steps to defeat the Prince's designs ; and, though the latter refused to accept an accommodation with the King, a government majority in the Commons was finally secured.<sup>1</sup>

Stephen, at the same time, had received the conditional promise of a peerage through Mr Hamilton, a brother of Lady Archibald Hamilton, the Prince's late reputed mistress. This he absolutely refused, a fact which Hervey,

<sup>1</sup> Hervey's *Memoirs*, ii, 242.

always on the look-out to do the brothers a good turn, took care to report to the King and Queen, in the hopes of obtaining a similar concession from the court. But peerages were proverbially as difficult to extract from George as banknotes, and no attention was paid to the suggestion. All that Hervey could secure from Walpole, with whom he had a long confabulation on the subject, was the promise that he would do what he could later on. With that he was compelled to remain content.

At the end of the session, a vacancy occurred at the Treasury Board, in consequence of the dismissal of Sir George Oxenden. Hervey besought Sir Robert to give this post to his friend, but was again unsuccessful. He procured, however, a definite promise that Stephen should become a peer when the next batch was created; but was so importunate that something should be done for his *protégés* that very year, that Walpole, half in anger, we are told, with his tormentor, gave the younger brother the Surveyorship of the King's Works, "an appointment worth above £1,100 a year."<sup>1</sup> Stephen was granted a minor post in June 1739—a Joint-Secretaryship of the Treasury<sup>2</sup>; and in 1741 was raised to the peerage as Baron Ilchester.

At the end of July, Hervey had a further chance of drawing Walpole's attention to his reliance on Henry's discretion. The occasion was the birth of the Prince of Wales's eldest daughter. To spite his parents, the Prince had removed his wife from Hampton Court to St James's in the dead of night, notwithstanding the fact that the pains of childbirth were already upon her. The Queen, who suspected that some fraud was intended, followed in haste, attended by Hervey and other members of her suite. On arrival Hervey at once sent for Fox, thinking "that he should want some sensible, clever body that he could trust to employ in making enquiries," and found

<sup>1</sup> Hervey's *Memoirs*, ii. 344.

<sup>2</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1739, p. 328.

means of bringing him to Walpole's notice by using him as his messenger.<sup>1</sup>

Fox took up his duties at the Department of Works on June 28. The Deputy-Surveyor at that time was the celebrated and versatile William Kent, architect, painter and designer, whose official post at the board was that of master-mason, and in whose care were the King's pictures. Thomas Ripley was acting as Comptroller, having succeeded Vanbrugh in 1726. He owed his advancement to Walpole, for whom he had built Houghton, his seat in Norfolk; and in 1737 became keeper of the royal roads, gates and bridges.

The chief business of the office consisted in the supervision of all royal palaces and gardens, the King's private residences and his roads and parks.<sup>2</sup> The erection of any public building was carried out by the Surveyor-General, whose hands, however, were tightly fettered by the close supervision of the Treasury over any extraordinary expenditure. During the six years and a half during which Fox held the post, no work of special magnitude can be traced.<sup>3</sup> Plans and elevations were ordered by the Treasury, in 1739, for the erection of new Houses of Parliament, and were approved, at an estimated cost of £167,000; but the matter seems to have dropped, probably at the outbreak of war.

An amusing letter from Hervey, addressed to "The Neglector of His Majesty's Works," may be here cited.

"ST JAMES, *Thursday night*, 1737.

Which of all the devils in Hell prompted you to tell the Queen that everything in her library was ready for

<sup>1</sup> Hervey's *Memoirs*, ii. 377.

<sup>2</sup> The King's private roads were handed over to the Office of Works in 1737. They included the routes taken by the monarchs when passing from one palace to another. Originally Newmarket, Theobalds, Richmond, Hampton Court, Greenwich and Eltham were all linked to Whitehall by these thoroughfares, which have long since passed into the hands of the public.

<sup>3</sup> Minute Books, Record Office.

the putting up of her books? Thou abominable new broom, that, so far from sweeping clean, hast not removed one grain of dirt and rubbish. Come to me to-morrow morning to take the rest of your scolding, and go with me to scold all your odious, dilatory subalterns. Bad night."

Hervey little knew how swiftly the remaining days of the life of his adored Queen were drawing to a close. Her death, the effect of a neglected and concealed rupture, took place within a few months of his joking reference to the rearrangement of her volumes. Fox spoke feelingly of his friend's grief.

"Lord Hervey is calm as ever I saw him, but afflicted to the greatest degree, and will not soon forget it, or, I fear, cease to look upon it, as he at present does, as the greatest misfortune that could befall him, and the loss of so much of the pleasure of his life, as makes the rest not worth thinking of. I see him every morning till 10 or 11, and dine with him ev'ry day, which, except his  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour's walking, is ev'ry moment he is below stairs. He is in health so-so, not so ill as you might expect; but I greatly fear less likely to mend than grow worse."<sup>1</sup>

The arrangements for the funeral were in the Surveyor-General's care:

*"Novr 24, 1737.*

"A new vault is to be begun to-morrow in H. 7th Chappel by our office, and I have receiv'd and given very uncommon orders abt a coffin. It seems there was a promise made between them of being bury'd in the same coffin; so a large coffin is to be made, in which the coffin (wch her body lys immediately in) is to be deposited. One side of this last mention'd coffin is to be made with screws and bolts, so as to be easily taken off when his

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to S. Fox, November 22, 1737.



body shall come there, that then both may lay contiguous in the same great coffin.”<sup>1</sup>

At the opening of Parliament, on January 24, Stephen Fox was selected to move the address in reply to the King's Speech. The *Parliamentary History* and *Gentleman's Magazine* both report that the duty fell to the lot of his younger brother; but it is clear that this was not the case from the docketed copies of the speech among the MSS. at Holland House. These differ somewhat from the printed records; but it was clearly delivered at the opening of the session. A letter from Horatio Walpole is further proof: “The motion for the address was opened by Mr Stephen Fox in the handsomest manner, as well as with the greatest decency and eloquence I ever heard: in short, it was a masterly performance.”<sup>2</sup>

Three speeches delivered by Henry during this session are, however, reported. On April 25, he opposed, on the third reading, a bill prohibiting the weaving of buttons and buttonholes, in order to encourage the manufacture of such articles by needlework. As weaving was a home industry, and hand-sewing depended on the importation of foreign silks and mohairs, he contended that the general utility should be preferred to the profit of a few. The bill was thrown out by a small majority.<sup>3</sup>

The other two occasions were connected with the maintenance of the army, and the question of the relations between Great Britain and foreign countries on the high seas. It has been pointed out that the heterogeneous sections of the Opposition were firmly united in endeavouring

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to S. Fox, November 24, 1737. The coffin was to be of black and yellow marble, 7 feet long and 4 feet 4 inches wide, in the clear. (Minute Book, November 29, Record Office.)

Mr Milman, Prebendary of Westminster, stated that the two sides of the wooden coffins were still standing against the wall of the vault in 1837 (Hervey's *Memoirs*, ii. 541).

<sup>2</sup> Trevor Papers, *Hist. MSS. Comm. Report*, XIV. pt. ix., Horatio Walpole to R. Trevor, January 24, 1737/38.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliamentary History*, x. 789.



to oust Walpole from his supremacy in the state. They welcomed any means of embarrassing the Government, regardless of consistency or thought of patriotic motive. In Parliament and in the country the discontented Whigs pressed for the immediate necessity of war with Spain ; while their allies, the Tories, played their old game of denouncing standing armies, and moved for a reduction of the forces by land and sea. The two policies, it was clear, were totally irreconcilable. Yet each clique was unhesitatingly content to sacrifice principle to expediency, and many of those who took a prominent part made no secret in later years of acknowledging the error of their tactics.

Fox's attitude throughout these indefensible intrigues was perfectly straightforward and intelligible. His feeling of obligation to his leader was augmented by personal conclusions founded on logic and common sense. The truth of this statement is proved by the substance of his remarks in Parliament. If war was to be made inevitable, he said, Britain's victory would only be accomplished by strengthening, rather than by weakening, her powers of offence and defence. It needed no peculiar inspiration to fathom the factious stratagems of Pulteney and his coadjutors, and practical reasoning was sufficient to expose the insincerity of their designs.

Upon the motion for the grant of the requisite supplies for the land forces, on February 3, 1738, an amendment was moved by Mr Shippen, reducing the numbers from 17,000 to 12,000 men. In the course of the proceedings Fox upheld the principle of a standing army, and claimed it as a feature of Whig tradition. He pointed out that the Bill of Rights sanctioned the maintenance of a force of this kind, if raised by the consent of Parliament ; and proved from the events of the Civil War how improbable it was that the army would band itself with arbitrary power. He urged that the whole measure depended upon what was best for the safety of the people ; and this, he considered,

would be seriously jeopardised by the adoption of the resolution which was before the House.<sup>1</sup> On May 15, he spoke shortly against an insidious motion brought forward by Pulteney under the specious title of, "A Bill for securing the trade to America."<sup>2</sup> It was founded on two acts, passed in Queen Anne's reign, at the very height of the war with France. By these, all prizes were to be handed over to their captors, and a capitation grant given for every prisoner taken at sea. Public opinion, in the spring of 1738, stimulated by the Opposition, was approaching boiling point. Reprisals against the atrocities of the Spaniards were universally demanded, and hostilities were plainly near at hand, for that nation was also incensed at the despatch of a British fleet to their shores. To pass such an act at such a time was but to hasten the declaration of war; though Pulteney had the effrontery to contend that it would be avoided by his suggestion. A measure so inopportune threatened to embroil the country with other maritime nations, and it was advisedly rejected on third reading.

In hopes of still maintaining peace, Walpole had entered into negotiations with Spain for a convention, to solve the problems at issue. But the relations between the two countries had become too strained to permit of more than a temporary accommodation. Despairing of an amicable settlement, he repeatedly tendered his resignation to the King. George refused him permission to leave his service, and Walpole, perhaps secretly cognisant of his opponents' intention to secede from Parliament, was content to reconsider his decision and to remain at his post. A heated discussion upon this suggested treaty took place on March 8 and 9, 1739, in the House of Commons, in the course of which Henry Fox defended the

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, x. 417. Fox probably replied to Lyttelton, certainly not to Pitt, as is suggested in one report of the debate.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* x. 837.

terms against Pitt's attacks.<sup>1</sup> Though the Government carried their motion, the feeling of the country made any such solution impracticable. Yet on the following day the secession of a large portion of the Opposition was announced. This step, taken against Bolingbroke's advice, was attended by all the consequences of similar captiousness. Walpole found himself in clover for the remainder of the session, and was enabled to pass his measures, notably a subsidiary treaty with Denmark, without interference. The seceders slunk back to their places in November soon after the declaration of war.

Fox's only reported speech in 1739 was upon the question of raising a body of marines<sup>2</sup>—a subject which was specifically mentioned in the King's Speech at the opening of the session. He opposed Sandys' motion, on November 27, for an address to the King, praying that drafts from standing regiments should be employed on shipboard. The suggestion of the ministers was to raise a separate force. Fox contended that the new scheme would injuriously affect the existing establishment of the land forces, and objected that there had been no opportunity for studying the Estimates for the ensuing year, by which the numbers of the troops were regulated. Further, that the full House was not a convenient place to discuss matters of this kind. He drew attention to the scarcity of officers, and maintained that no such body of men as the Marines could be recruited without a full complement of suitable men to lead them. Sandys' proposal was defeated; but a further discussion, as to the best and cheapest method of bringing the force into being, arose, upon a request from Lord Polwarth for particulars of a similar levy in the reign of Queen Anne. The points urged by the Opposition were, firstly, that the army was

<sup>1</sup> J. Selwyn to T. Townshend, March 10, 1739 (*Coxe's Life of Sir R. Walpole*, iii. 519). His actual speech is not recorded.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary History*, xi. 164.

already too large, notwithstanding the requirements of the war ; and, secondly, that a large number of officers was a useless expense, which could be avoided by increasing the size of the individual company rather than by forming completely new regiments.

Similar principles were very forcibly enunciated in a debate a year later,<sup>1</sup> in which Fox again spoke, on a motion for the augmentation of the army. It had been preceded by a discussion in the House of Lords on the state of that force ; and a protest, signed by certain peers, was entered in the Journals of the House against the policy of the Ministry. Strong exception was taken by Pulteney to the maintenance of any kind of standing army ; for, unable to foresee the events of the succeeding decade, he urged that the necessity was removed by the impotence to which the Stuart cause had sunk. Fox, in his speech, pointed out the folly of altering, in time of war, a system which was clearly responsible for Britain's pre-eminence among nations, especially as the saving to the country was at most a paltry £30,000. He and other speakers made light of the arguments of the Opposition in favour of reducing the existing proportion of officers to men, and demonstrated from actual facts that the disasters which in recent years had overtaken certain continental powers were largely due to an insufficient and indifferent staff of company commanders.

The conduct of the members of the Opposition in these debates seems somewhat illogical to the ordinary observer. They had insisted on war, and yet, having gained their point, they appear to have desired to deny Walpole the means of successfully carrying the struggle to a conclusion. But it is only fair to Pulteney, Carteret and the other leaders, to point out the view upon which they insisted—that by sea alone could Spain be defeated. In support of this, they urged that an increased vote should be granted for the use of the navy, and deprecated the

<sup>1</sup> December 10, 1740 (*Parliamentary History*, xi. 928).



waste of money on troops, who, in their opinion, could be of little use in the contest.

It is unfortunate how little material is preserved to throw light on this period of Henry Fox's career. Beyond an occasional letter to his brother, his correspondence between the years 1739 and 1742 is of scanty proportions. Could we but elucidate it, the chief object of interest during those years, when the rising politician was feeling his way and seeking to comprehend the limitations of his own powers, is his relations with Sir Robert Walpole. His public references to military finance and organisation, subjects on which he appears to have specialised within the walls of the House of Commons and which stood him in good stead in later years, were full of sound common sense. They show no special brilliance, as they are handed down to us, in diction or originality. Yet Walpole's remark to Pelham in 1743, when advising him upon the future of his Administration, "Fox you cannot do without,"<sup>1</sup> testifies to the high estimation in which he held the talents of his subordinate. Had the great Minister recognised, in the private intercourse which was a feature of their political connection, that the general ability of the younger man was bound to lead him to pre-eminence in the party? Was it that a sense of gratitude for Fox's personal fidelity had created a desire in Walpole's breast to advance his future interests? Or had his keen eye to character early discerned that latent genius for party management which was destined to hand Fox down to posterity as his own equal in the dexterous management of the House of Commons? Perhaps he had even made practical test of those powers, and had primed his subordinate with his own schemes of corruption. Fox certainly, before the general election of 1741, had an intimate knowledge of the conditions which obtained in the various boroughs and electoral districts of the south of England. Yet little is preserved amongst

<sup>1</sup> Orford to H. Pelham (Coxe's *Pelham Administration*, i, 93).



his papers to show that this information was derived from his patron. One passage only, in a letter to Stephen Fox, dated October 16, 1740, proves that Walpole discussed such matters with him. "I go to dinner at Sir Robert's, when we are to look over a list and consequently shall talk of elections. If I hear anything extraordinary that you don't know already, I'll add to this."

After the summer of 1739 Walpole's position at the head of affairs was daily becoming more precarious. To preserve his place, he had acquiesced in a war which he was firmly convinced was as likely as not to prove the ruin of his country. He was thus forced to initiate and carry out measures of which he entirely disapproved. His health, too, was failing rapidly,<sup>1</sup> and with the decrease of his prestige the efforts of his antagonists were redoubled.

Serious developments had arisen on the Continent at the close of 1740, which materially added to his difficulties. Upon the death of the Emperor Charles VI in October, his daughter, Maria Theresa, succeeded to his dominions. Frederick II of Prussia,<sup>2</sup> who himself had only been seated upon the throne for a few months and was bent on self-aggrandizement, took the opportunity of advancing with a large force into Silesia. At one stroke Walpole's seemingly successful policy, of opposing the Bourbons in France and Spain by a confederation of the rest of Europe, fell to the ground.<sup>3</sup> France sided with Prussia, notwithstanding the fact that both countries had accepted the "Pragmatic Sanction," which secured Austria to Maria Theresa. The latter turned to England, and not in vain. A subsidy was voted for her assistance by Parliament in April 1741, for by that time Walpole's efforts to hold England aloof from the war had failed. Soon after, George betook himself to Hanover, much

<sup>1</sup> Pope wrote in 1740, "All agree Sir Robert cannot live."

<sup>2</sup> Frederick the Great.

<sup>3</sup> The scheme had been initiated by Horatio Walpole, Sir Robert's brother, recently Ambassador at the Hague.

against the wishes of his Minister. Whilst abroad, fearing for the safety of his beloved Electorate, he concluded a treaty of neutrality for that State for the period of one year from September, without the knowledge of the British Cabinet. The unpopularity of such a contract in England cannot be exaggerated. The measure recoiled upon the tottering Government, who were in reality in no way to blame. From that moment Walpole's ultimate defeat and retirement became a mere question of time.

During the preceding years we find an increasing tendency among the more fickle of Walpole's adherents to leave the sinking ship. The only men of any weight in the Cabinet were Newcastle and Harrington, Secretaries of State, and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. The relations between Walpole and Newcastle had for a long time been very strained, and were not improved by the appointment of Lord Hervey to the Privy Seal in 1740. Newcastle foresaw that Walpole's fall could not be indefinitely postponed, and began to make advances to the Opposition. His junction with them could not have come at a more opportune moment. A general election was due in 1741, and his influence on such an occasion was all-important. To maintain himself in power, no trouble or expense was ever too great. He was always ready to dip deeply into his private fortune to secure the results he desired, and at his death it was computed that £300,000 of his inheritance had been sacrificed to his love of politics.

As long as the old Parliament remained in being, Walpole was secure.

"Many and confident have been the reports that Sr R. is to retire, decline, etc., but I can with great positiveness assure you that he thinks of no such thing, nor do I believe the case at all desperate. Upon paper we have undoubtedly a majority as great as that I shew'd you (exclusive of what we gain by double elections and deaths), from which the most timid genius cannot strike off one, and I hear of some gain'd, with, I believe, more certainty

than there is foundation for the bet Mr Dodington offers of £1,000, that he gives a paper seal'd up with the names of six who never voted agst Sr R. W. before this Xtnas and never will vote with him after it." <sup>1</sup>

But the results of the elections in May told a different tale. Notwithstanding the intrigues of Walpole to obtain the assistance of the Jacobite vote <sup>2</sup> and other efforts to stand his ground, the Ministerial majority in the new Parliament was sadly attenuated.

Before this, in February, the Opposition made trial of their strength in both Houses. Simultaneous motions for the dismissal of Sir Robert, on the ground of the ill success of his policy at home and abroad, were moved by Lord Carteret and by Sandys.<sup>3</sup> Both resolutions failed; but the magnitude of the Government majority in the Commons was due to the defection of the many Tories who left the House before the division. The bonds of union between them and the Whig malcontents had been loosened in the previous year by the death of Sir William Wyndham; and gratitude for a kind action by Walpole, in early life, was the probable inducement to Shippen, the Tory leader, to spare his political foe on this occasion. Both of the Foxs spoke against the motion. Stephen's defence of his friend and patron is fully reported,<sup>4</sup> but that of his brother has not been handed down to us. The latter took part in another debate during that session. He spoke in the Committee stage of a bill for the encouragement of seamen. His contribution to the discussion is interesting only because we find that he moved an amendment, which was disapproved of and opposed by his leader.<sup>5</sup>

Stephen Fox made his last speech in the House of Commons on April 9. He was raised to the peerage a

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to S. Fox, January 12, 1741.

<sup>2</sup> McCarthy's *History of the Four Georges*, ii. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Coxe's *Life of Sir R. Walpole*, iii. 559. A *résumé* of Sandys' speech, taken by Henry Fox, is among the Walpole papers.

<sup>4</sup> *Parliamentary History*, xi. 1335.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* xii. 97, 137.

month later as "Lord Ilchester, Baron of Woodsford Strangways."<sup>1</sup> The occasion was a debate upon the subsidy to Austria, which arose out of a request in the King's Speech for a vote of credit to support the Pragmatic Sanction. He strongly supported the address of the House of Commons assenting to the demand. This was moved by Mr Clutterbuck, one of the Lords of the Treasury, and was passed without a division. Parliament was dissolved on April 25.

The new House met on December 1. In it the balance of parties was very different. Walpole's solid phalanx of supporters was reduced to a bare majority, and even that depended upon the results of the election petitions which were pending. On the first division ministers were successful, but only by six votes; and the Westminster enquiry was soon afterwards carried against them. Another setback had materialised on December 16, when Dr Lee was elected Chairman of Committees, in place of Giles Earle, the Government nominee. "What this will end in, God knows," wrote Henry to his brother on the 17th; "all the good news I can tell you is that by the specimen given at Wms' last night, it is not likely to sink the spirits of either Winnington, him or me."

It was all very well for Walpole's younger adherents, who might even be able to retain their official places in a reconstruction of the Government; but the position of the Minister himself was far more equivocal. At best he stood to lose for ever the power in which he had so long revelled, and the shadow of worse was behind—impeachment and loss of liberty. His most dignified course,

<sup>1</sup> The patent is dated May 11. "My brother kissed hands yesterday. He is Lord Ilchester; Bromley, Montford; and How, Chedworth. They cut cards for the precedence, and my bro. writes me word that Bromley cut the Queen of Hearts, he the knave of Clubs, and Mr How the 4 of Hearts.

"I can't get it entailed on me." (H. Fox to C. Hanbury-Williams, May 1741.) (Phillips MSS.)

<sup>2</sup> Charles Hanbury-Williams.



doubtless, after his defeat on the Westminster petition, had been resignation, but he treated this opportunity as he had scorned similar chances of graceful retreat. He employed the interval of adjournment of the House of Commons at Christmas in an attempt to win favour with the Prince of Wales, by obtaining promises from the King of increased allowance and payment of debts. Naturally these advances were unsuccessful, and on January 21, three days after the House had reassembled, Pulteney brought in his motion, referring the papers which related to the war to a Select Committee. The new attack was not anticipated at that juncture by the ministers, but so well did Walpole and his friends acquit themselves, that, with the assistance of two recalcitrant Tories, they were able to reject the motion by three votes. Henry Fox joined in the debate, but his speech is not reported.<sup>1</sup>

A week later the Government were again defeated on the Chippenham election. Then Walpole saw that at last his time had come. His actual resignation took place early in February. A few days afterwards he fulfilled his previously declared intention of shaking from his feet for ever the dust of the House of Commons. He entered the Upper House as Earl of Orford. A touching scene is reported between the King and his Minister at parting. But, though deposed from outward authority, it was apparent that the new peer would still remain no negligible factor in politics. His services were still secretly at the King's command, as far as failing health would permit. Indeed, to the day of his death, as the shadow behind the throne, he was able to make or mar the fortunes of ministers and ministries.

In announcing his pending resignation, on February 2, to the Duke of Devonshire, Sir Robert stated definitely that Lord Wilmington would be placed at the head of

<sup>1</sup> "Mr Winnington, Sir W. Yonge and H. Fox spoke incomparably well." Sir R. Wilmot to Devonshire, January 23, 1742. (Coxe's *Life of Sir R. Walpole*, iii. 586.)



the Treasury, but that other arrangements were still to be settled.<sup>1</sup> This plan seems to have been the outcome of two conferences between Newcastle, Hardwicke, Pulteney and Carteret. Newcastle had been authorised by the King to offer the leadership to Pulteney. He, true to his previous resolution, refused any specific office, but stated his desire for a peerage and a seat in the Cabinet.

Walpole had lost no time in carrying out his preconceived designs for securing the King's welfare and for saving his own skin. His chief endeavour had been, firstly, to create a maximum of friction between the various sections of his opponents, and, secondly, to guarantee the continuance of the Whig party in power. In both of these efforts he was successful. The Jacobites and Tories were furious at the scanty list of appointments which were allotted to them as their share of the spoils. This feeling of discontent found expression at a meeting summoned on February 11, the very day of Walpole's resignation, at the Fountain Tavern, in the Strand. Carteret refused to attend; but Pulteney and Sandys both attempted to stem the tide of dissatisfaction. In reality the new Ministry differed in little more than name from that of Walpole. The Pelhams were still in office; Wilmington, Harrington, Hardwicke and Devonshire also remained. Sandys, however, was a new-comer, as were Lords Carteret and Winchilsea.

To the public, who had expected a thorough cleansing of the Augean stable, the whole dispositions proved a bitter disappointment. With Walpole's fall they had looked for new faces and a new policy. They found neither. Even Pulteney, who, in opposition, had posed as a prodigy of disinterestedness, was quickly dethroned from his lofty pedestal. It is clear that he had been contemplating preferment without office for some months.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Life of Sir R. Walpole*, iii. 592.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. Walpole to Devonshire, January 12, 1742 (*Ibid.* iii. 587).

His patriotism could not rise to the anxieties of official responsibility and the arduous task of leading a restive House of Commons. His inclination pointed towards the quieter atmosphere of the Upper Chamber. Walpole at once perceived the slip which his rival was about to make. By his advice the King consented, though at first with bad grace, to create the latter Earl of Bath. From that moment the new Minister sank to nought in the estimation of the country, and his authority was over for ever before it had well commenced.

The real power was now vested in the hands of Lord Carteret, the new Secretary of State. Wilmington was little more than a figure-head. Carteret certainly, at this crisis, had unique opportunities. His versatile talents had gained for him the reputation among his contemporaries of being the ablest man of his day. On good terms with both courts, he had the immense advantage of the ear of both Prince of Wales and King. To George, his intimate knowledge of German affairs and his complete command of that language made him especially acceptable. Indeed, his views on foreign policy had been for some years more in accordance with those of the monarch than had Walpole's. He was popular with the masses, and was not disliked by the Whigs as a whole. We are even told that, but for his unwillingness to desert Pulteney, Walpole's followers, from distrust of Newcastle, might have been inclined to act under his leadership.<sup>1</sup>

We must here allude to one further change in the Cabinet, which took place some months after the formation of the new Administration. Lord Hervey was removed in the summer from his office of Privy Seal, to make way for Lord Gower, a new recruit to the Whigs from the Tory party. The little courtier had made himself thoroughly unpopular with all sections by his biting tongue and caustic wit. To dislodge him from his high seat was Pulteney's first care. Hervey does not seem to

<sup>1</sup> Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Shelburne*, i. 37.

have realised that he was to be expelled until the middle of July, although all was arranged a month earlier. He then hurried to the King, who offered him a pension in lieu of office. This he scorned, yet was content to accept later, when the blow of dismissal had actually fallen.

Since the autumn of 1739 the friendship between Fox and Hervey had waned. The cause of their quarrel is uncertain, but the breach was evidently serious. Lord Ilchester, writing to the latter on November 13, 1742, says of his brother, "His rule is the same with yours, and he as seldom mentions you as you do him." This coolness had no effect on the relations of the elder Fox with Hervey; but, in his resentment at his dismissal, the latter strove to turn his friend against the court. Ilchester was placed in a difficult position. On the one hand, he was loath to distress the King, "when his affairs are difficult and perplex'd, when faction runs high, and the favour I have received very recent." On the other, he could not forget his affection for his old comrade and his indebtedness to him for his peerage, not to mention previous favours. He hesitated to desert him; and attempted, but all in vain, to turn him from open opposition.

The dilemma in which Ilchester was placed did not remain a secret. It became the cause of much speculation at court. Henry wrote to his brother: "The King frequently and uneasily enquired about you. And it must have arisen from himself, because I think (whether from Ld Orford's opinion or what I don't know) none of his ministers ever thought you would oppose." All Henry's advice was thrown into one scale. He counselled his appearance at the opening of the session. "Yr non-attendance at first will be interpreted opposition."<sup>1</sup> "Ld Hervey is talking anti-ministerially at Bath, and has put himself at court in a light that his greatest

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, October 28, 1742.

enemys could never have hoped to have seen him placed in." He continued :

"The restraint which I lay upon myself in writing this, for you know I could write a great deal upon the subject, may make what I do write less clear. But you can supply it. I beg you would do so, and, consulting your own cool and good understanding, resolve and act according to the dictates of it. Excuse and don't fret at, any more than you will be influenced by, what you call too much warmth in me. And, on the other side, love your friend, without letting him shew you to the world in a character most unsuitable to your heart and understanding. And when you admire his parts, consider there is a plain distinction between them and what is called judgement and good sense, and that you are, upon my word and honour you are (it is not a thought taken up since I quarrel'd with him), as much superior to him in the two latter, as you can think him to you in the former ; and of the former you think greatly better than they deserve. Adieu."

No appeal, however, from either side was sufficient to draw Ilchester from the country. He wrote : "A winter there would be very agreeable to my inclinations and extremely suitable to my circumstances."<sup>1</sup> He was ready to rush post haste to town, should further attacks be made upon his late leader. For the rest, he was content to allow any construction to be placed on his absence. But his letters prove that his loyalty and gratitude to the King prevailed over any preference for his friend, whose activity in opposition was cut short by death early in the following autumn.

<sup>1</sup> Ilchester to Hervey, November 13, 1742



## CHAPTER V

BOTH Houses of Parliament reassembled on February 18, 1742, after the adjournment. The heinousness of Walpole's crimes had apparently been increased by his downfall. Nothing was thought of within and without the walls of Parliament, nothing was spoken of, but the measures which were to be pressed forward against him. Even the discussion in the Commons, on March 4, of a petition from certain merchants, asking for more adequate protection for their ships by British cruisers, did not pass without a reference to this all-pervading topic. Sir John Barnard moved to insert the words, "As we are now going to make inquiries of a much higher nature," as a reason not to particularise, and in consequence not to proceed against the Admiralty for negligence. This brought up Bubb Dodington, who had himself recently held office in the late Government, to make a direct attack upon Sir Robert. He expressed a wish that steps would be taken to make the office of First Minister too dangerous for any one to accept in future. Lord Doneraile and Winnington assured him, in words that would have shamed any one less thick-skinned than the member for Bridgewater,<sup>1</sup> that *he* would not escape his share of censure, should it be found merited. But when Waller, the Tory leader, reminded Winnington that, in such a case, he too would be implicated, "Fox rose up, and, laying his hand on his breast, said he never wished to have such a friend as could only excuse him by bringing in another for equal share of his guilt. Sir John Cotton replied, he did not

<sup>1</sup> Dodington sat for Bridgewater from 1722 to 1754, and for Weymouth 1754-61. He was created Lord Melcombe in the latter year.



wonder that Mr Fox (who had spoken with great warmth) was angry at hearing his friend *in place* compared to one *out of place*." <sup>1</sup>

Fox was himself still in office. He did not resign his seat at the Board of Works, as has been frequently stated, but continued to perform the duties until the end of 1743.<sup>2</sup> It was not from want of any loyalty to his chief that he remained a member of that motley Government. There had been no general resignation of Walpole's friends at his fall, nor was such a course deemed desirable. A Whig Administration showed, in Sir Robert's opinion, the fairest promise for his country's safety and for his own. The fact that his special adherents continued in office tended to improve the situation, as far as he himself was concerned.

Fox, who had spoken warmly in defence of his patron in the past, had now a further opportunity of proving his fidelity. On March 9, Lord Limerick brought forward a motion in the House of Commons for a secret committee to enquire into the conduct of affairs for the past twenty years. The resolution was negatived by two votes. It then appeared that those in authority were, with few exceptions, unwilling to press home the charges against their predecessor. His power had been the main object of their attacks, not his person. Pulteney, who remained in the House of Commons until the close of the session, was absent throughout the debate, presumably in attendance at the bedside of his daughter, who was dying. But a hint to his intimates of lukewarmness was sufficient to turn the scale against the motion.

Fox's arguments against the chief points raised by his opponents were skilfully conceived. The most serious accusations alleged that public money had been employed

<sup>1</sup> H. Walpole to H. Mann, March 8, 1742 (*Letters*, Toynbee ed., i. 187).

<sup>2</sup> Minute Books, Record Office. His successor, the Hon. Edward Finch, was appointed on December 30, 1743, after Fox's re-election as a Lord of the Treasury.

in bribing members, and that electors had been prevented from voting according to their consciences. He maintained that the Opposition had produced no proof that such charges were correct. He further asserted that a state of war was not a time to court disclosures which might possibly create diplomatic difficulties, and would certainly accentuate internal dissensions. One passage in his speech, as presented in the *London Magazine*,<sup>1</sup> is of special interest. He gave a plain and candid statement of his views on the conduct of elections, and on the position of the lower classes. It shows too clearly how impotent were the uneducated during the eighteenth century to influence for good or evil the government of their country.

“ Our elections, thank God ! do not depend upon the giddy mob. They are generally governed by men of fortune and understanding, and of such our ministers, for this twenty years past, have been so happy as to have a majority in their favour. Therefore, when we talk of people with regard to elections, we ought to think only of those of the better sort, without comprehending the mob or mere dregs of the people ; for an election may be free and uncorrupted, though these appear against it, but would be very far from free, if the electors were intimidated and compelled to vote as directed by a tumultuous mob of low people.”

But Walpole was not to be granted so easy an escape. The rank and file of the Opposition, headed by Pitt, insisted on a further trial of strength. Lord Limerick was again put forward to move a slightly different proposition—that a committee should be appointed to enquire into the conduct of Lord Orford during the last ten years. Pulteney spoke in support of the motion, but counselled moderation. It was passed by a majority of seven.

<sup>1</sup> There are two versions of this debate, as of the subsequent one on March 23, taken respectively from the *London Magazine* and *Gentleman's Magazine*. Fox's speech differs materially in each report. (*Parliamentary History*, xii. 462, 508.)

Fox's voice was heard in eulogy of Sir Robert's character and abilities.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with this vote, a secret committee of twenty-one was appointed, and Lord Limerick was elected chairman. Vehement attempts were made by the members opposed to Walpole, who were in a majority, to find proofs of his guilt. But from the onset the difficulty of obtaining evidence was prejudicial to the success of their plans. They schemed to pass a bill indemnifying witnesses who might themselves be incriminated in the course of their statements; but this was thrown out by the House of Lords. Their report, issued at the end of the session, failed to produce any charges of serious import; and the insignificant result of this widely advertised investigation was received with indifference by the public. A further attempt in the next session to reopen the subject was defeated in the House of Commons by a large majority.

Fox again seems to have taken part in this second debate :

" Ld Bath has, ever since he came to town, been steadily and uniformly, and warmly too, for stopping all pursuit of Ld Orford, and for supporting this union of Whigs at home, and the present measures abroad. Yesterday's debate was not a good one. I spoke, they say, very well; I think pretty well only. The degree to which the opposers hate, and the speakers amongst them abuse, Sandys, is not to be conceiv'd. Nor is it easy to imagine how firmly he expresses his contempt of it. I speak of his firmness; I have not much to say of his ingenuity in answering what is said to him." <sup>2</sup>

During the autumn Fox was engaged in essaying to compose serious differences which had arisen between

<sup>1</sup> This speech is reported only in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and is there attributed to his brother, who was, however, at that time no longer a member of the House of Commons (*Parliamentary History*, xii. 583).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, December 2, 1742.

Charles Hanbury-Williams and his wife. The friendship between Williams and Fox had commenced on a journey to Houghton about three years before, and continued without break or interruption until the former's death.<sup>1</sup> He was the third son of John Hanbury, of Pontypool Park, in Monmouthshire, and took the name of Williams at the death of his godfather, Charles Williams, of Caerleon, who left him a large fortune. He married, in 1732, Lady Frances Coningsby, daughter of Thomas, Earl Coningsby. The union was not a happy one. Yet at one moment Fox's good offices seemed likely to be successful; but all hope of reconciliation soon faded away, and separation proved to be the only peaceable solution of their future relations.

Fox spent some weeks of September in Wiltshire, but the attractions of London had temporarily a prior claim to those of the country. He had set his affections upon an unworthy object, whose identity remains unrevealed. His ardent pursuit of the fair one took up most of his time, and for the moment most of his thoughts. He showered upon her verses of his own making; he begged from Williams's facile pen a copy of lines which he was to alter to his liking and forward as his own.

"She tells me her birthday is next Friday, and that she is then 27 (and the first part I conclude is true). Now if you could send me (so that I might have them either on Wednesday or Thursday) some verses, prettier than any of Swift's on such an occasion, you would oblige me infinitely, whatever I should do her by carrying them to her; yet I should get a kind look or a kiss the more, and I should be ashamed you really knew how great a value I rate such favours at."

"Cælia," as the lady is termed in his confidential correspondence with Williams, remained obdurate, and

<sup>1</sup> C. Hanbury-Williams to H. Fox, November 8, 1748. Horace Walpole's statement (*Memoirs*, i. 334) that Fox never forgave Hanbury-Williams for his advice at the crisis which arose in 1754 after Pelham's death, is confuted by their correspondence subsequent to that date.



Fox's passion soon began to cool. "A person I mentioned to you grows not at all unlike other women, and that too is a little troublesome." It was flattering for her to be able to dangle at her side a well-favoured gallant, who was "reckon'd to have a very good understanding, speak well in the House, and be a rising man in the Ministry"<sup>1</sup>; but the advantages were all on one side. Convinced at last of her want of affection for him, Fox was content to slip from her bonds, and heard proof from Williams, without a serious pang, that their mutual friend, Lord Fitzwilliam, had become the favoured recipient of her embraces.

It is clear from the letters which passed at this time that Fox's intimacy with Henry Pelham, Newcastle's younger brother, who remained Paymaster of the Forces, was making rapid growth. Social amenities mingled agreeably with political discussion. Fox often submitted copies of Hanbury-Williams's verses to Pelham for criticism, possibly with a view to keep his friend's name under notice. Williams was eager for office, and did not forget to implore Fox and Winnington to use their best efforts on his behalf.

Fox was consulted in the preparations for the ensuing session. "Mr Pelham and Mr Scrope<sup>2</sup> are coming here by and bye to look over lists," he wrote on October 13. The numbers of Pelham's followers in the Cabinet were equal to those of Carteret. They could therefore look forward to the meeting of Parliament without serious apprehension.

"I think everything looks extremely well for the approaching sessions, and if I may judge, we shall have no slack or indifferent attendance. Lord Bath, I hear, is more afraid that our united strength will not do, than inclin'd to move any matters that will lessen it by dis-

<sup>1</sup> C. Hanbury-Williams to H. Fox, December 1742.

<sup>2</sup> John Scrope, M.P. for Lyme Regis; for many years business secretary to the Treasury. For the above-mentioned lists see Add. MSS. 32,699.



union. . . . Attendance for the first part of the sessions is, I think, the whole matter, and full or thin will either lessen or encrease the Opposition exceedingly.”<sup>1</sup>

The Prince of Wales was in momentary agreement with the Government ; but the Duke of Argyll, after accepting Cabinet rank, threw up his place in a huff. His opposition does not seem to have been of a very resolute character.

“ In your House, the D. of Argyle’s low spirits and the little activity of mind he has, being, as Mr Lyttelton expresses it, *given up* to my Lord Carteret, will disconcert extremely ev’ry scheme of Opposition there. If I was a *Broad Bottomist*, how I should hate his Grace ! As I am not, I don’t love him.”<sup>2</sup>

Parliament met on November 16. Fox described the opening scene to his brother :

“ Our debate on Tuesday was on the address, and particularly on the approbation given in it, tho’ in general words, to the measure of taking the 16,000 Hanover troops into English pay. Winnington spoke excessively well. His and Mr Pelham’s on our side, and Pitt’s on theirs, were the only good speeches. Upon the whole, it was a bad debate, but an excellent division. The question was on the whole address. Ay’s 259, No’s 150.

“ The Prince labour’d and labours for us as much as he did for his own question, and says Pitt might as well have spit in his face as spoke as he did against this measure.”<sup>3</sup>

Parliament was now embarking on that thorny question of the payment of foreign troops and subsidies, which was at frequent intervals to disturb the political horizon until the end of the Seven Years War. The preference shown by the first two Georges for the country of their birth had for long been a matter of adverse comment among their British subjects. Annual absences abroad,

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to C. Hanbury-Williams, October 28, 1742.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester. Undated. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, November 18, 1742.

often prolonged to indecent length, and an undisguised affection for all things German, had caused unmistakable distrust in the land of their adoption. How far the claims of Great Britain were obtaining adequate consideration in the conflicting interests of the two States, was a doubt which had taken deep root. The Opposition, now composed of the Tories and of the scanty remnant of the officeless "Patriots," as the followers of Cobham had been nicknamed, were without a battle-cry. Here was one ready to hand. Why should England be sacrificed to the advantage of Hanover? Why should the former be mixed up in a war which could in no way benefit her? Hanover had recognised the Pragmatic Sanction, and it was in her own interest to assist to maintain it. What reason was there that she should not carry out these obligations? And why should England be saddled with the expense of enabling her to do so? The complaint was plausible, for France and England were nominally not at war. It was one which could be expanded to any extent by unscrupulous politicians.

A detailed examination of the whole question, however, forces us to realise the superficiality of the grievance. The difficulties which confronted Maria Theresa after her accession had necessitated British intervention, in order to save Austria from dismemberment. Circumstances were now changed, and Carteret had reverted to Walpole's former policy, of opposing France by a confederation of German States. France was financially in a far less vigorous position than England; and it was clearly to the advantage of the latter to exhaust the resources of her rival by keeping her troops fully engaged on her Eastern frontiers. In reality, therefore, Great Britain was furthering her own aims by the policy of subsidies and payment of mercenaries. The benefits which accrued were not solely on the side of Hanover.

The reference in the King's Speech to the Hanoverian troops was ambiguous. The publication of the Estimates

a few weeks later was the first official intimation of the intention of the Cabinet. Previously in the pay of the Electorate, these men were to have been disbanded, owing to the expense of their maintenance. But Carteret required a larger force in Flanders, and decided early in the autumn to employ them there, defraying the cost from the British Exchequer. The subject was fully debated on the motion of Sir William Yonge, the Secretary-at-War. The resolution was carried by a large majority. Henry Fox spoke strongly in favour of the project,<sup>1</sup> but specially turned his attention to proving that these regiments were the most suitable for such employment. As subjects of the same Prince, they were fighting in their own interest, unlike ordinary mercenaries, and were not liable to be withdrawn at a critical moment. He concluded: "I shall think that these troops ought to be retained, unless it can be shown that any others may be had, who may be less dangerous, or of greater use." Pitt followed, and introduced a pretty compliment into his opening remarks. "If the hon. gentleman determines to abandon his present sentiments as soon as any better measures are proposed, I cannot but believe that the Ministry will very quickly be deprived of one of its ablest defenders." His speech was a bitter tirade against the Hanoverian policy, and his sarcastic allusions to the Electorate must have deeply offended George. Pitt was now the guiding spirit of the Opposition in the Commons; for the nominal leader, Edmund Waller, the friend and follower of Cobham, was too deficient in powers of oratory to act up to his position. Pitt refused to be enticed from his course, even by the frantic entreaties of the Prince of Wales. He had yet to realise how often he would rue this outspoken language, before the time arrived when his genius and the mistakes of others were to make his services indispensable to an unwilling monarch.

The session closed without incident on April 21. Six

<sup>1</sup> December 10, 1742 (*Parliamentary History*, xii. 1030).

days later George, thirsting for military glory, left England. Accompanied by his second son, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, and by Carteret, he joined the British army operating in the Low Countries under Lord Stair. It is not to our purpose to recount the incidents of this campaign, which led up to Dettingen. The King was present at the battle in person, and showed that lack of courage was not among the failings of our Hanoverian rulers.

Within a few days of the victory, which took place on June 27, died Lord Wilmington, a Prime Minister only in name. His elder brother, Lord Northampton, had, many years before, married Jane Fox, Henry's half-sister; but the youth seems to have reaped no political advantage from the connection. Lady Northampton died in 1721, and there is no mention of any special intimacy between the two families. Indeed, it was not to such as Wilmington that an ambitious young man would look for preferment. A reshuffling of the ministerial posts had already been in contemplation at the end of the session, and Pelham had obtained a promise of the reversion of the Treasury before the King left the country. Carteret appears to have acquiesced in this arrangement; but when the time came he supported the application of Lord Bath for the post.<sup>1</sup> The uncertainty which prevailed owing to the King's absence was heightened by the impenetrable silence maintained by Carteret. Bitter were the complaints of the Pelhams, at home, that no official news was vouchsafed to them. "The coffee-house joke," wrote Fox, "is that Ld C. was looking over the map, and by some accident the ink fell down and blotted out England, since which he has never thought of it."<sup>2</sup>

A letter from Fox to his friend Marlborough in Germany,<sup>3</sup> asking him, in Pelham's interests, to fathom

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Richmond, August 12, 1743 (Add. MSS. 32,701).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, August 18, 1743.

<sup>3</sup> Marlborough had command of a brigade at Dettingen.



Carteret's design, gives an account of these ministerial dissensions. It incidentally refers to the question of promotion for himself, which was not to be long postponed.

" Aug. 26, 1743.

" What bickerings or uneasinesses may have been between the D. of Newcastle and Ld Ct in the beginning of the year I do not know, but that there were such, I am as sure as you know I always was that there would be. But nothing of them appear'd to the world, nor were there, I believe, any between Ld Ct and Mr Pelham till about a week before the King went, when Ld Ct, without communicating his design, prevail'd on the King to offer the Privy Seal to Lord Bath.<sup>1</sup> Lord Bath refused it; and then Ld Ct proposed Lord Cholmondeley, in declared opposition to Mr Pelham, who wished to keep in Ld Gower; first, because, whoever was to be Privy Seal, he desir'd to have some hand, or at least to be consulted in making him; and in the next and chief place, not to make the Cobham Party desperate, nor dispose of an employment then which would be so much wanted in the settling of matters at the beginning of the next sessions, when Ld Wilmington, if he had not dy'd, was to have chang'd his employment. For it was well understood that Mr Pelham was not to go into the House of Commons any more but as head of the Treasury. With difficulty, and after open and avow'd contention, the Pelhams got the better, and kept in Ld Gower. But this was too rough a trial of strength among friends, and was an ugly symptom; so that Mr Pelham thought it necessary to come to an *éclaircissement* in a long and most explicit conversation with Lord Ct, which seem'd to end as well as could be wish'd. All uneasinesses were to be forgot, Mr Pelham's being to be at the head of the Treasury was again explicitly mention'd and agreed to, and after sincere assurances on Mr Pelham's side and strong ones on Lord Carteret's (renew'd by him to Lord Chancellor and the D. of Newcastle the night before he went away), the sea parted them.

<sup>1</sup> Compare H. Walpole to H. Mann, May 12, 1743 (*Letters*, i. 346).

“ Soon after, Mr Compton<sup>1</sup> was thought past recovery, and Mr P. was so extremely good as to write to Ld Ct to speak to the King for me to succeed him, as being one whom (if he should at the beginning of the winter come to the head of the Treasury) he should like to have there, and one who on other accounts (meaning your Grace’s known goodness to me) he thought would be agreeable to his Lordsp. His answer to Mr Pelham, which was the last letter he ever wrote him, and which, by the way, begun, ‘ Dear Harry, I begin in familiarity and will continue and end in friendship,’ was that he would endeavour to dispose ev’ry thing agreeably to his wishes, but I believe he never mention’d this to your Grace as he naturally might have done. Mr Compton recover’d, and Lord Wilmington dy’d on the 2d of July. Ld Bath wrote to Lord Carteret the same day by a servant of Sr John Rushout’s, whom Lord Carteret still keeps with him, which looks as if he did design Ld Bath some answer, tho’, if Lord Bath is to be credited, he has not yet heard one word from him. On the 5th of July, Mr Pelham sent a messenger with a letter to the King and another to Lord Carteret, which to be sure he do’s not intend to answer, for the very messenger who carry’d it is return’d long since, and others have come weekly. But he has not even done Mr P. the honour to acknowledge his letter, nor ever mention’d Ld W.’s death but in one letter, and there only says the King is greatly concern’d at it, and more especially at it’s happening at so critical a time. His dispatches are short and so insignificant, that the Regents<sup>2</sup> know no more than I do the motives of what has been done or the plan of what is to be done abroad. In short, no body here is treated by him as if they had or were to have the least share in any part of the Administration.”

The King at length signified his intention of placing Pelham at the head of affairs. This had throughout been the advice of Orford, who wrote to Newcastle that his

<sup>1</sup> Hon. George Compton, member for Northampton, afterwards sixth Earl of Northampton, a Lord of the Treasury, 1742-4.

<sup>2</sup> The Lord Justices appointed for the period of the King’s absence abroad.

brother must accept on any terms offered to him, "however circumscribed." <sup>1</sup> Pelham's ultimate resignation, if circumstances became too difficult, was preferable from the ex-minister's point of view, to the immediate triumph of Lord Bath. Carteret, seeing that the King's mind was made up, accepted the situation; and on August 16 wrote a friendly letter to Pelham, promising support.

Fox proved to be materially correct in his forecast of Carteret's intentions:

"Some think he must intend to turn Tory and have a new Parliament; others, that he must at least design to take in the Opposition and turn out all Ld Orford's old friends. Others, that he trusts to success abroad to bear him out in whatever he does, and has no scheme at all; but that, when Mr Pelham shall (as it is the general opinion, and mine too, that he sooner or later must) come to the head of the Treasury, he will say, 'It was always so designed; that Mr Pelham knew he was to have it. But that Ld Bath had wrote; that it was not proper to irritate him, so he wrote to neither, and delay'd the thing.' But I fear such language would go but a little way towards healing the wound which he is so unnecessarily giving to the Kg's, his own and the Whig interest." <sup>2</sup>

Walpole had certainly not exaggerated the difficulty of the task which Pelham was undertaking. It was fortunate for him that the Opposition had been weakened by the recent deaths of Argyll and Hervey, and that its counsels were as disunited as those of ministers. Suspicion and jealousy reigned supreme among the various groups into which both parties had drifted. Carteret, pursuing his continental alliances abroad, and seeking to ingratiate himself with the King, was heedless of his colleagues at home. The letters which he vouchsafed to them were colourless and uninformative. He allowed them no knowledge whatever of the Treaty of Worms, an arrangement

<sup>1</sup> Orford to Newcastle, August 14, 1743 (Coxe's *Pelham Administration*, i. 84).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Marlborough, August 26.

between England, Austria and Sardinia, which contracted for an annual British subsidy of £200,000 to the latter State. When this document was at last brought to their notice the Cabinet at home accepted it, though with ill grace, as George had already affixed his signature to it. But they entirely refused to be coerced into the further convention with Austria, to pay the Queen an annual sum of £300,000, "so long as the necessity of her affairs shall require." It was insisted that this payment should be limited to the duration of the war, as in the case of the treaty with Sardinia.

Even Pelham's own personal circle was not altogether a happy family. The fatuous Newcastle was beginning to show jealousy of his brother, and whimperingly complained that the latter "used the first person on all occasions."<sup>1</sup> He was wavering on the question of Hanoverian troops, and finally set himself to oppose their further employment. Fanned by the reports from the seat of war, popular feeling was running higher than ever upon the relations between the two countries. The resignation of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Stair, and other officers, in irritation at the preferment accorded to Hanoverians, gave colour to the rumour that the British troops would as soon fight their allies as their foes. The King's yellow sash, a Hanoverian order worn at Dettingen, was cited as a further proof of his affection for his foreign possessions; and no mention was made in the address presented by the City of London, on his return, of that victory in which he had taken so valiant a part. Hanbury-Williams at this time voiced a line of thought which might have constituted a serious menace to the reigning House: "What may we not expect to hear, when malice has reason for it's foundation to build upon? The family upon the throne must not use England ill. They are outdone from that hour, and when they fall, they fall like Lucifer, never to *hope* again. They came here, they were brought

<sup>1</sup> Add. MSS. 32,701.



here, to try an experiment, and if that fails they have no pretence to try or be try'd again." <sup>1</sup>

It cannot, therefore, be any matter of surprise to find that the Cabinet were preparing to reverse their action of the preceding year. A majority were now certainly in favour of dismissing the Hanoverians. "The ill blood, hate, contempt and anger, which ev'ry day encreases against the Hanoverians in the army, and which you may be sure will communicate like wildfire here, already make some of our best friends speak of employing them again as impracticable; and yet, without them, what that we wish can be practicable either in the field or in the closet?" <sup>2</sup> Once again Orford came to the rescue. He foresaw that to disband these troops would only augment Carteret's influence with the King, and must inevitably tend to weaken Pelham. To retain them, on the other hand, would refute Carteret's prognostications, and demonstrate that the Whigs were anxious to humour the King by carrying out his wishes. It was arranged that Orford should meet the principal members of the Government at dinner in Hanbury-Williams's house. A discussion followed in which his arguments prevailed; and it was determined to continue the troops in British pay.

The immediate result of this decision was the resignation of Cobham and Gower. The former was always opposed to the employment of Hanoverians, though on other matters he frequently gave his support to Pelham up to the time of his death in 1749. Gower had a further grievance—that no Tories were to be given places in the pending reconstruction. Lord Bath was advised to apply for the vacant office of Privy Seal, but tried instead to obtain it for Lord Carlisle. The King, however, of his own accord gave it to Lord Cholmondeley, Orford's son-in-law, a proof of his satisfaction at the behaviour of his new ministers.

<sup>1</sup> C. Hanbury-Williams to H. Fox, October 22, 1743.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to C. Hanbury-Williams, October 6, 1743.

The vacancies in the Government were filled on familiar lines. Orford's party was once again completely in the ascendant. Sandys, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was unwilling to serve at the Treasury under such circumstances, and resigned his place in return for a peerage and the Cofferership. Pelham took the office in addition to his other duties, and introduced Henry Fox and Lord Middlesex, the Duke of Dorset's son and a follower of the Prince of Wales, to two vacant seats at the Treasury Board. Winnington became Paymaster in Pelham's place.

The opening of the session was marked by violent attacks in both Houses on the ministers. Pelham was absent from his place throughout the early part of December, seeking re-election. Chesterfield, in the Lords, and Pitt, in the Commons, were the chief spokesmen of the Opposition. The former threw the whole blame for the indifferent success of operations abroad upon Carteret; and Pitt, too, singled him out from his colleagues for vituperation and censure. Pitt passed in bitter review the recent measures of continental policy. Hanoverian troops, conventions, treaties, subsidies, all came under the lash of his caustic tongue. He even proposed to meet the motion for the address with a direct negative, an indignity to the Crown almost without precedent. He was answered by Winnington in an able speech, upholding the conduct of Carteret and the propositions of the Cabinet. Fox, who spoke later in the debate,<sup>1</sup> took serious exception to the disrespect which the Opposition were preparing to show to the King. It was amazing, he said, that the idea of sending no reply to the Speech from the throne could ever have been suggested. The insult such a course would convey "must necessarily put an end to all correspondence between him [the King] and Parliament, which would put an entire stop to all the constitutional wheels of our Government, and consequently

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, xiii. 206.

make it indispensably necessary for His Majesty to think of governing without any Parliament at all; and the consequence of this would be domestic confusion and a civil war." He defended the necessity of supporting Austria, which was again threatened with the joint attacks of Prussia and France, in view of the importance of maintaining the balance of power in Europe. The aggrandizement of France was a certain menace to the welfare of the British Isles. The division, forced on by Sir Francis Dashwood, showed a majority of 129 for the address. A variety of subsequent motions in both Houses, directed against the Hanoverians and the prosecution of the war in general, were in every case negatived.

In these debates signs were not wanting that further disintegration was in progress among the opponents of the court. The violence of Pitt, and in a lesser degree of Lyttelton, had seriously annoyed their patron, the Prince of Wales. For months he had struggled in vain to curb Pitt's asperity, and during the spring seems to have offered to pay his expenses for a journey abroad, if he was not prepared to moderate his language and take a place if offered. A negotiation between Pitt and Pelham, during the summer, produced no apparent result. But by December, the former began to change his standpoint. He was as opposed as ever to the employment of Hanoverians and subsidies to Austria, and was willing to support the motion, that war should only be continued in conjunction with Holland. Yet he and Lyttelton were both ready to accept the continuation of the war in Flanders as consistent with England's honour. Their attitude was frankly illogical, and leads us to the conclusion that they were beginning to tire of independent isolation. Chesterfield was won over to support their views, which were condemned and overruled at a general meeting of the Opposition at the Fountain Tavern. Pitt's silence on January 11, 1744, when Winnington moved for a grant to continue the war in Flanders, was more significant, to

quote Glover,<sup>1</sup> than would have been his open support of the ministers.

Fox took no part in the debates subsequent to December 1. He was engaged throughout the month in securing his re-election at Windsor. The business was brought to a satisfactory conclusion on the 26th. Expense seems to have been the chief difficulty which he had to face. "The company which I treat every Wednesday encreases excessively. So I am in a fair way to be very poor and very successful."

During the winter Fox fell desperately in love. He was inspired with a genuine and all-absorbing passion, which was destined only to terminate with life itself. The brothers, as we know, spent the Christmas of 1733 at Goodwood.<sup>2</sup> There Henry met the object of his devotion, probably for the first time. Lady Georgina Caroline Lennox, the Duke of Richmond's eldest daughter, was born on March 27, 1723. The Lennoxs boasted of royal blood. The Duke's father was the son of Charles II and his favourite, Louise de K roualle, Duchess of Portsmouth. Whether disparity in age,<sup>3</sup> want of fortune or the humbleness of Henry's origin was most displeasing to the ducal couple, we do not know. Stephen, at least, was on very friendly terms with the Duke; and it is clear that his brother was received on an intimate footing. Henry entertained the Richmonds at dinner on several occasions during 1743, and we find him taking steps to obtain truffles, a delicacy in which the Duchess delighted, for her from Wiltshire. The fact remains, however, that any thought of such a match was most distasteful to the lady's parents.

That Henry's wooing was ardent and impetuous we cannot doubt from his letters. Confident that the impression which he had made was permanent, his self-

<sup>1</sup> Glover's *Memoirs*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Fox was only four years younger than the Duke himself.



assurance carried him safely over every obstacle. Writing to the Duchess in March, after the ban of their Graces' displeasure had gone forth, he protested that Lady Caroline had done nothing worthy of censure.

"Before I spoke to yr Grace at the play she never said what amounted to more than 'that I might propose myself'; 'that she should have no objections, if I could get over your Grace's and the Duke's'; and 'that she wish'd me success.' Nor ever once went so far as this last expression, without adding that she hop'd I had too good an opinion of her to think she would do any thing to make either of you uneasy, whom she had every reason in the world to love. When I urg'd her to repeat *that she wish'd me success*, she said she should never scruple to repeat anything she had said; but hop'd I remember'd she was not to be ask'd anything without your consents. So careful was she to keep herself, as she thought, in her own power; and as far as she could in words, she did. In her heart, she could not; and yet, I believe, knew that so little, as to go from the play that night thinking she could be guided by your Grace; nor till your Grace's averseness to it made her struggle with her passion, did she ever know the strength of it.

"Now may I beg yr Grace to stop here and consider, if this is true, in what your daughter is to blame.

"Your Grace will perhaps say, as the Duke of Richmond did, 'If so unengag'd, why was I so sure of her?' When she found your Graces would not consent, she might have rejected me. And so, indeed, Madam, she might with honour. May be she thought she should; I alone knew she could not. And if this must end unhappily, 'tis I have been to blame, in taking so much care to hide from her herself the impression that I made, lest she, alarm'd, should give your Grace the alarm too soon. But long and constantly observant of ev'ry movement of her heart, the most unaffected and sincere that ever was, I knew (what she now knows, but never knew till she was bid to get the better of it) its attachment to be unalterable."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Duchess of Richmond, March 12, 1744.

Three days before the date of this letter Fox had talked matters over with the Duke, and, previous to the interview, some correspondence had passed between them. A letter of March 8 begins by thanking the Duke for the unexpected kindness of his letter, "and for having look'd upon this affair in the light of a misfortune, as it really is, and not a fault." Fox continued :

"But your Grace advises me to think no more of what would end in my own ruin. Surely *ruin* is too strong a word. That it is not for my interest, my Lord, I readily allow. If it were and that my motive, your Grace would see how easily I could obey you. But a love, that in its infancy could get the better of all considerations with which I sincerely endeavour'd to suppress it, will not, I fear, now be so tractable as, in obedience to your Grace, and for my own ease, I heartily wish it were. The Dss of Richmond told me I should thank her six months hence. What makes her Grace think so, I don't know, unless it is that I am so little known to her. But do's her Grace or you believe the same of Lady Caroline too? Serious, considerate, sincere, older far in mind than in years, with a heart as tender but as firm too as ever yet was form'd, do's yr Grace think she could take a fancy lightly? Or that she can ever alter? Indeed, my Lord, she will not; and your Grace is deciding on the happiness or misery of her whole life, not of a few months only."

That the horizon did not clear is evident from Fox's further note to the Duke, dated April 19. In this he expressed the deepest regret at the anger which his letter to the Duchess had caused. This "seem'd to arise from my presuming to imagine your daughter's affections more engag'd than they really are." He offered to give up further thought of his lady-love, if she could truly tell her parents that her attachment to him had "ever so little alter'd" in the six weeks which had elapsed since they last met. Plainly, from the sequel, no such assurance was forthcoming.

On May 11, the Richmond family were to leave London

for Goodwood. The prospect of seven or eight months' certain separation was too serious a consideration to be faced by the lovers with equanimity. Henry's entreaties and distress overcame the girl's more prudent resolves. The modesty of her nature shrank from the expedient of open flight. She would have preferred to continue her endeavours to soften the heart of her parents. But love won the day. She gave a promise to leave her home when Henry wished. She proposed, as a suitable opportunity for escape, the morning after a ball which her father was to give on May 9 at Richmond House—an entertainment to be honoured by the presence of the Prince of Wales. "I always rise at my usual time after setting up late, and papa and mama and my sister never get up till twelve or one." <sup>1</sup> She agreed to the suggestion that their wedding should take place secretly earlier in the week.

And so it happened. They were married privately at Hanbury-Williams's residence in Privy Gardens on May 3. Only the Duke of Marlborough and the owner of the house were present. The clergyman did not even know whom he was uniting <sup>2</sup>; such were the facilities for clandestine alliances in those times. For some unexplained reason Lady Caroline left her father's house on the 8th. Fox wrote to the Duke announcing the wedding, and added in a postscript that she had just come to him. "She is not in my house, so it is still in your Grace's power to let it be a secret till you go to Goodwood."

His Grace's fury knew no bounds. The ball was abandoned; the family hurried to the country; and the Duke and Duchess vowed eternal resentment. London society was in a ferment. "If His Majesty's Princess Caroline had been stolen, there could not have been much more noise." <sup>3</sup> Newcastle treated the matter as an affair of

<sup>1</sup> Lady C. Lennox to H. Fox, "Sunday night," [April 29, 1744].

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Duke of Richmond, May 8, 1744.

<sup>3</sup> H. Walpole to H. Mann (*Letters*, ii, 23).

state. "I thought our fleet or our army were beat, or Mons betrayed into the hands of the French," said Carteret, on hearing the explanation from the lips of his brother Secretary of "this most unfortunate affair."<sup>1</sup> Pelham protested to the Duke his innocence of any knowledge of what was taking place, but we suspect that he was not quite so ignorant as he made out.<sup>2</sup> The younger members of the Pelham family were equally profuse in their condolences, with one exception. Miss Pelham backed up her friend Lady Caroline nobly, and confounded those who cavilled at Fox's parentage. He was, said she, as good a gentleman as his brother Lord Ilchester, and doubtless the Richmonds would have jumped at the latter for a son-in-law. Even that brother had hastened to assure the Duke that he had done his best to dissuade Henry from further thoughts of Lady Caroline, and that the marriage had come upon him as a complete surprise. His letter takes an almost comic aspect, when we recall the similar circumstances which attended his own wedding eight years before. Marlborough and Williams were very generally abused for their share in the incident, and the latter, for the moment, was in serious danger of losing the red ribbon of the Bath, which had been promised to him.

The Foxs went to Cheltenham soon after their marriage for the benefit of Lady Caroline's health. They spent the autumn at Old Windsor, but paid Mrs Horner a visit at Melbury before going there. Hanbury-Williams enquired about an advertisement in the papers, "for a portmanteau dropped from a post-chaise." The initials *H. F.*, and "the double beaver night-cap," mentioned among the contents, made him conclude that the lost articles belonged to his friend. Henry's reply indicated

<sup>1</sup> C. Hanbury-Williams to H. Fox (*Holland House*, i. 40).

<sup>2</sup> "Has Mr Pelham when he spoke to Papa ever told him there was danger of my marrying you without their consent, if they wd not give it? I hope he has; 'twas what I all along wish'd he wd." Lady C. Lennox to H. Fox [April 28 1744].



the correctness of the surmise, and related that he had in consequence to turn aside to Redlynch in order to borrow shirts and white waistcoats !

Fox had vacated his official residence in Scotland Yard when he obtained a seat at the Treasury. He had now to find a home suitable to his new circumstances, and, after some deliberation, decided in July upon taking Winnington's house in Conduit Street, for a year, at £120, "more than I think I can afford, and Winnington lets it to me for a little less than it is worth." The venture was so successful that the Foxs arranged to extend the lease, and retained it till Winnington's death.

The Richmonds made no effort towards reconciliation, and it was not till after the birth of their eldest grandson, in 1748, that they relented. Fox was then Secretary-at-War, and a recognised tower of strength in the political world. The Duke could pride himself that his daughter's husband had proved himself something better than a mere "son of a footman,"<sup>1</sup> though in reality that footman was the devoted adherent and adviser of his own grandfather, Charles II. Lady Caroline made repeated attempts to conciliate her parents, but, to her great sorrow, all in vain. The family were strictly forbidden to communicate with her, and even her favourite sister, Emily, was debarred from any intercourse until after her marriage with Lord Kildare. Yet she was not absent from her parents' thoughts, for we find the Duke asking Sir Benjamin Keene to make enquiries about her condition after an accident in 1744<sup>2</sup>: "Enquire from yourself or any other way you please (provided it is not from me or my family) how my daughter Caroline does. . . . Nobody but you should know I have made any enquiry about it." Forgiveness came at last, and a meeting, arranged through the good offices of Lord Ilchester, filled Lady Caroline's cup of happiness to the brim. A letter from Fox to Horace

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Richmond to Sir B. Keene, November 9, 1744 (Melbury MSS.).

Walpole testifies to the unexpectedness of the event to those most concerned :

“ DEAR HORI,

“ On Saturday Lady Caroline had a long and kind letter from the Duke and Duchess of Richmond asking if I would bring her at  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr after 7 the next evening. She should be received with the utmost tenderness and affection. That they had said all they would say in the letter, and desir'd no mention ever made on either side of any thing that has passed.

“ As this was not at all expected (no application having been made for 12 months), it surpriz'd and confus'd Ly Caroline, and was the illness which made her send to put your dining here off. We went, supped there last night, and are to dine there to-day. No conditions whatever are requir'd, nor do I know how it came into their thoughts now. And you actually are now as much appriz'd of it all as I am.”<sup>1</sup>

The Duke and his son-in-law became the best of friends, but, in the opinion of Fox's intimates, the Duchess, in her heart, never really forgave him for the flight of her daughter.

<sup>1</sup> [1748] Waller MSS.

## CHAPTER VI

" I AM glad to think that we are likely to see you soon in town," wrote Pelham to Fox on September 25, 1744. " I own I had thought it a good while since we have met, and, in the present situation of affairs, one wants sometimes to unburden." Fox, however, does not publicly appear upon the political stage during that year. A French expedition from Brest in February, which Prince Charles Edward, son of the Pretender, proposed to accompany in person from Dunkirk, and which was directed against the shores of England, was scattered by tempest. The attempt was not ill-timed, for the country was well-nigh denuded of troops. A Dutch force was hurriedly summoned, in compliance with the treaty obligations of Holland, to assist in its defence. This scare, and the declaration of war by France in March, caused an adjustment of past differences in military circles. Stair and Marlborough came forward with the offer of their services, and the former was again appointed Commander-in-Chief. An act was passed before the close of the session, to declare that all correspondence with the Pretender or his adherents was treasonable. The Habeas Corpus Act was also suspended for two months.

Upon the Continent success favoured the French. In the Cabinet, the rivalry between Carteret and the Pelhams culminated in the resignation of the former at the end of November. By the death of his mother in October he had become Lord Granville. Ill feeling had grown apace between the disunited sections of the Government. A memorial was drawn up by Lord Chancellor Hardwicke

complaining of the conduct of foreign affairs in general. This was presented to the King by Newcastle on October 31 ; and the hint was then plainly given to him that he must take his choice between Granville and the rest of the Cabinet. In his despair (for he clung desperately to his favourite Secretary of State) the King summoned Orford to his aid. The ex-minister dragged himself to London by slow stages from his sick-bed at Houghton. It was his last journey. He died in London a few months later. His advice turned the scale in favour of the Pelhams. Granville had no following, and was unable to make terms with the Tories. Sullenly George gave his consent to the change, and Granville's seals were handed to Lord Harrington.

It was the object of the Pelhams to stifle opposition by a coalition of all parties—to place government on a broad bottom, according to the language of the times. Bath and Granville were alone to be excluded from participation. A basis of agreement was facilitated by the understanding that the Hanoverians should be dismissed from British service. Hinde-Cotton, Gower, Waller and Lyttelton, all received places. The last-named was forthwith dismissed from the Prince of Wales's household, as Frederick for once sided with his father, and gave all his support to Granville and his policy. Bedford was sent to the Admiralty. Chesterfield went to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant, since the King stipulated that a post should be given to him which did not necessitate personal intercourse. Pitt remained without office. George could not forget, and would not as yet overlook, his offences in the past. The Secretaryship-at-War was the special object of his ambition, but this was still to remain ungratified. Yet the obvious desire of the Pelhams to obtain that support in Parliament, which, now Granville had fallen, he was willing to give, was an earnest of office in the near future.

While the result of the descent on England in February



1744 was still in doubt, an indecisive action was fought in the Mediterranean. The combined French and Spanish fleet, which had been blockaded in Toulon by Admiral Mathews, attempted to slip out, intending to join the Brest fleet. The want of cordiality which existed between the Admiral and his second-in-command, Admiral Lestock, was an open secret. Their mutual distrust ruined a unique chance of destroying the enemy's fleet. Lestock's division took little part in the earlier portion of the battle, and, when in full pursuit of the enemy's disordered squadrons, was recalled by a signal from Mathews. The feud between the two admirals was continued on paper, and resulted in Lestock's suspension. Returning to England in May, the latter demanded a court-martial, and issued serious counter-charges against his superior officer. In order to obtain the necessary witnesses, a long delay was inevitable, but the matter was raised in the Commons on February 26, 1745, by a motion for a Grand Committee, to investigate the miscarriage of the attack. Pelham at first resisted the proposal as unconstitutional and unprecedented, but gave way when he discovered that it was supported by the popular voice within and without the House. The Minister's forecast of the difficulties which this course would entail proved to be in no way exaggerated. It was found impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion. All that was done was to pass a resolution stating that the action had reflected upon the honour of his Majesty's arms, and praying the King to grant courts-martial upon the various officers concerned.

"Harry Fox has gained the greatest honour by his assiduity and capacity in this affair," wrote Horace Walpole.<sup>1</sup> Fox showed himself throughout the proceedings a zealous champion of Lestock's cause. He spoke, at the close of the enquiry, against Mathews, who was a member of the House of Commons, with such animus, that

<sup>1</sup> H. Walpole to H. Mann (*Letters*, ii. 85).

the latter described it as "for an impartial speech, the severest he ever heard."<sup>1</sup> He moved the address for the courts-martial, spoke strongly against printing the evidence already given by witnesses at the bar of the House, and insisted that the names of the two admirals and certain subordinate officers should be specifically inserted. Pelham, who opposed him on this point and declared that he considered the mention of particular names undesirable in every way, supported Mr Vyner's amendment for striking out that of Mathews. This was defeated by 218 to 75—the result of the junction of the whole Tory party with a large proportion of the Whigs. The subsequent courts-martial dragged on for more than a year. Mathews was adjudged unfit for further service. Lestock was honourably acquitted, but died in 1746, some months after the result of his trial had been made known. He recognised in his will the good offices of his chief defender by a legacy of plate.<sup>2</sup>

Granville had been removed by the machinations of Pelham and Newcastle, yet his policy was still to be continued unchanged. It is true that the cost of the Hanoverians was no longer to be directly defrayed by England, but a further subsidy of £200,000 was granted to Austria, whose service they now entered. The return of the troops to the British service a year later excited no serious comment. The King, unable to forgive the loss of his favourite minister, was barely civil to the Government. Newcastle was singled out as the chief offender, although, in contradistinction to his brother, he had become an out-and-out supporter of the war. The wisdom of the Duke of Cumberland's recent appointment to command the allied army in the Low Countries was open to grave doubt. He was not yet twenty-five, and had no experience in the field. It was recognised, how-

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Hon. P. Yorke (*Parliamentary History*, xiii. 1261).

<sup>2</sup> Lady C. Fox to H. Fox, December 17, 1746. His picture also hangs at Holland House.

ever, that a royal prince might best control the heterogeneous forces which had been collected. The campaign was entirely unsuccessful. The Dutch troops proved half-hearted and unreliable, and the allied forces were everywhere outnumbered by the French. The gallant but costly retreat of the British regiments at Fontenoy was the prelude to further disasters. Fortress after fortress fell into the hands of Marshal Saxe.

An agreement was arrived at in August between England and Prussia, whereby Maria Theresa's husband was to be recognised as Emperor in succession to Charles VII, who had died in the early part of the year. The price to be paid was the cession of Silesia to Prussia. The Queen of Hungary, by which title Maria Theresa was commonly known, was loth to obtain peace at such a cost; but a series of disasters forced her to ratify the arrangement in December by the Treaty of Dresden.

The news of the battle of Fontenoy infused new life into Prince Charles Edward's schemes. Leaving an apology to King Louis for his hurried departure, he set sail from France with two ships for Scotland, where he landed at the end of July. George was in Hanover with Harrington, the Secretary of State, and hurried home at the urgent request of the other ministers. As soon as he arrived he granted an audience to Granville, who with Stair and Tweeddale maintained that the rising in Scotland was of no account. The Pelhams were not cordially received. The King he even consulted Hardwicke as to a change of Ministry, but no new combination was found practicable. Lord Orford's prophecy a few years before—"This crown will be fought for *æquo Marte*,"<sup>1</sup> had more than come true. The country, denuded of troops to supply the gaps in Flanders, was at the mercy of any raid from the other side of the Channel. "I think we have not left troops enough in this country to mount guard at the royal palaces, nor to quell an insurrection or smuggling

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, November 19, 1745.

party of one hundred men," wrote Pelham to Fox on July 22. Marshal Wade, too, declared, "England is for the first comer; and if 6,000 French land before these Dutch and English are here London is theirs as soon as they can march to it; and they may march to it from any part of the kingdom without the least opposition." Whatever were the actual numbers of troops available, it was fortunate indeed that the French held their hand in expectation of a Jacobite movement in England which never took serious shape. The opportunity for a decisive blow was lost for ever.

In Scotland the Pretender's advance had been hailed with enthusiasm. The royalist forces which attempted to stem the tide of his victorious career were hurled back with ignominy. The Prince crossed the border into England early in November, and reached Derby on December 4. By this time the British troops had reached home from the Continent, and were reinforced by 6,000 Dutchmen. Cumberland himself returned in October, and assumed the supreme command.

During September the militia had been called out in various counties to support the regulars, and special regiments were raised by Bedford, Montague, Cholmondeley and other noblemen. The composition of these regiments and the status of their officers were the chief matters which occupied Parliament at the opening on October 17, after loyal addresses had been passed. Fox warned his brother at the end of September that the suggestion was taking shape, and told him that the regiments were to be paid, "as others, for the time they are on foot. The officers to keep their rank, with only the half-pay they were before entitled to. The men to be enlisted to serve in England, and for 2 or 3 years only." He asked whether Ilchester would like to be one of the first to volunteer to raise a corps. His offer, accepted or refused, might become advantageous in the future.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, September 25, 1745.



It does not appear that Ilchester acted upon the hint, though he moved the address in the Upper House.<sup>1</sup>

Fox does not mention the terms of the original offer of these lords—themselves to raise and pay the troops. Apparently the expense of the undertaking was quickly foisted upon the country, while the benefits were retained in the hands of the organisers. Only a few of the regiments were actually raised.<sup>2</sup> Lord Kildare, in Ireland, was alone prepared to carry out his original offer, but permission was refused. The appointment of the officers gave rise to further jobs, which Fox told his brother he foresaw must arise. The colonels selected their own dependents and relations for the posts, regardless of suitability. The point arose, whether these should retain their rank when the regiments were disbanded. The King disliked the idea, but, as it was backed by Pelham and Bedford, he did not openly oppose it. A hint that the Commons should address him to refuse his sanction was taken up by Winnington and Fox. The latter considered that the grant of permanent rank would be a distinct hardship to the officers of the regular forces, and took a strong line in the debate on October 31. He described his position in a letter to Ilchester, dated November 1. It was the second occasion, within a few months, on which he had run counter to his chief.

“ MY DEAR LORD,

“ Caroline has a little drum to-night, which, however, engages my attention too much for me to write at length the proceedings of yesterday. My part in them makes more noise than a pretty large drum, and I am this day told that the D. of Bedford says Mr Pelham must not only defend this measure himself, but make all the

<sup>1</sup> Game Books. He is stated, in the *Parliamentary History*, to have been the seconder.

<sup>2</sup> H. Walpole to H. Mann (*Letters*, ii. 147). “ It is certain that not six of the thirteen regiments were ever raised—not four were employed ” (Walpole’s *Memoirs*, i. 447). Thirteen regiments of infantry and two of cavalry had been offered.

servants of the Crown join with him in it, or there is no going on. Considering the part ev'ry man he came into place with has acted this session, I think this way of thinking in his Grace very droll on this occasion, and it pleases me much, tho' not enough to make amends for the great uneasiness the part I took gives Mr Pelham. We lost the question about the rank by 2, and hope to carry it on Monday. I particularly answer'd Pitt, who complimented these noblemen. I don't think I spoke so well as I hear I did, and have the mortification to know that most of the applause I receiv'd whilst speaking, wch was great, was owing to the pleasure the Torys took in my seeming division from Mr Pelham, and in my shewing Mr Pitt that his imposing way of speaking should not prevent me from shewing, whenever his private friendships warp'd him from his pretended patriotism. I let him know too, that the House would not be the dupes of popular motions, which could never do half the good that this measure would do harm. Hence it is that some people say I won't bear Pitt should be Secretary-at-War, and am declaring off. You know it is no such thing, but in shewing him to his party, and helping on the separation of them from him, wch I did pretty well, I think I have done Pelham service. . . .

"We carry'd 4 instead of 6 months for the foot. Then came a question about horse or dragoons. Yonge good-naturedly<sup>1</sup> mov'd it, in an artful time and manner (much good may it do him to be so solicitous and so skilful in serving his enemies); and Winnington seconded him, and carry'd it for horse, in order, I suppose, to be the more easily excus'd for moving, as he did immediately, an address that they might have no rank. I, as my way is, went one way throughout."

By Monday, November 3, when the subject was discussed on the Report, the King had altered his mind on the subject of rank. Consequently, the address was lost by a larger majority than before. Fox spoke again, in

<sup>1</sup> "I think I did not explain as you desir'd what I meant by Yonge's good nature. It was no more than that he was doing the business of those who insist, as a *sine qua non*, that he shall be no longer Secretary-at-War" (H. Fox to Ilchester, November 9, 1745).

answer to Pitt, but on this occasion had lost Winnington's support.

"I can give you no juster description of my part in Friday's debate, than that I had *all* the faults and most of the beautys of great, violent warmth of the right side. On Monday, I spoke better, in my opinion, than I ever spoke, with calmness, but with great severity. . . . Conway and some others voted, thro' private connection or affectation, for the rank. It was at last made as strongly a point as any you ever remember. I saw Mr Pelham yesterday, as well as to-day, at the Treasury. I thought yesterday there was a little awkwardness on his side, none on mine, I having on Tuesday wrote him word that I had got out of this scrape as I always would of any I got into, by going through it ; and would differ from him no more, provided he would never suffer anybody's measures but his own to come into Parliament, or, if he could not prevent it, be no longer a minister. . . . Winnington, who had begun upon the rank on Friday, was silent, and tells me of a *bon mot* of Ld Perceval's<sup>1</sup> (who is very eager for all sorts of force on any terms). 'We are ruin'd,' says Perceval ; 'Pelham is undone, Fox is run mad and Winnington is sly.' Amongst my mortifications it is not the least, that last Sunday the Prince of W. drank my health in a bumper. *Think of that.* The K. says he likes me, but he believes I hate the nobility because of my match (which he did not like) ; but he says it is hard I should lie with a man's wife, and hate him for it.

"I flatter myself you'll approve of my not being threaten'd off by the D. of Bedford, or coax'd off (being once engag'd) by my friends. And, my dear Ste., if you approve, I care not for the censure of a few, and less for the applause of the many, which I meet with on this occasion." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John, Lord Perceval, afterwards second Earl of Egmont. Fox hints in another letter to his brother that Winnington was influenced by the King's change of attitude. "Winnington told the D. of Bedford his Grace had convinced him, and told the K. that he had answered the Duke very shortly and smartly. It is the rock on which our friend will split ; you and I have seen and told him of this—often."

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, November 7, 1745.

Pitt's attitude during this winter gave rise to much speculation. Constant allusions to his conduct and expedients are to be found in Fox's letters. His open support of the Pelhams in Parliament, secured by their blandishments, had laid him open to serious charges of inconsistency. But now the time for claiming the reward of his acquiescence had arrived. On November 20, Pitt and Cobham arranged a meeting with the Pelhams, and formulated their demands. The statement that the former apprehended "great difficulties"<sup>1</sup> in obtaining office is corroborated by his appearance in the House of Commons on the following day, with a completely unexpected motion for an increase of the navy. This raised the chief points at issue in the conditions which Pitt had put forward, that England should only continue as an auxiliary to the war on the Continent, should limit her support for the Dutch to 10,000 men, and should reserve all her energies for use against France and Spain by sea. Perhaps he hoped to compel the Government to recognise his claims by a show of force. If so, the result must have fallen lamentably short of his expectations, for he divided only 36, in a small House, against 81.<sup>2</sup> Fox adverted to his future rival's situation, in a letter to Lord Harrington on November 28 :

" I should have given your Lordship an account of this day se'nnight's debate, if Lord Coke had not. What makes it still more extraordinary is that the D. of Bedford, Ld Gower, Ld Sandwich, Halifax and every Lord of the Admiralty but Grenville, are as much or more against the motion and the measure of a war merely naval, wch it pointed at, as Ld Harrington or Mr Pelham, &c. So that, to carry their point, ev'ry body must be made to submit to Ld Cobham's fireside. And yet, standing on this very narrow ground, did Pitt use Pelham so as leaves it hardly reputable for the latter ever to agree with him,

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Chesterfield, November 20, 1745 (Add. MSS. 32,705).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, November 21, 1745 ; H. Walpole to H. Mann (*Letters*, ii. 154).



and makes it quite impracticable for himself to recede. And yet if he do's not recede, how any accommodation can be brought about, unless the whole Royal family, all the Cabinet Council, and both Houses of Parliament, in a matter that concerns all Europe, receive the law from these few assuming young gentlemen and that one assuming old woman, I can't imagine."

Nothing daunted, Pitt again assailed Pelham a month later, this time on the subject of a message from the King, announcing that 6,000 Hessian troops had arrived in England to take the place of the Dutch, who had been recalled. Lord Cornbury was for thanking the King for his announcement of the fact to the House, not for his provision of these foreign troops, whom, he said, he personally hoped would be packed off home without delay. Pitt supported him, but found his isolation more marked than before. Fox gives a fuller account of the debate than is elsewhere given :

" Dodington made the strangest speech you ever heard, more against than for, but voted with us, plainly for fear of going out. Ld Gower was most heartily indeed with us, as appear'd by his son, brothers, Tom Gore, Vernon of Sudbury, the Chetwynds, all with us, and still more by Fazakerly, Sr J. Cotton and his son, kept away by his Lordsp.

" Pitt spoke ill, and abus'd the City without measure for being, as Sr Wm Calvert, Knight and Mellish inform'd the House they were most heartily, for Hessians and Hanoverians too, as necessary for our security. He called them *shopkeepers*. ' Let the citizen of London mind his shop, but let us shew that there are hundreds of gentlemen in this House who have thoughts of deeper policy, more courage, and less mean, less narrow considerations, than men frighten'd for their money out of their senses. We are not to think as they do ; rather let us advise the citizen of London, when he is weighing his money with his right hand, with his left at least a little to feel for the Constitution, &c., &c., &c.'

" Pelham, who had spoke first ill, reply'd to this

very well. I was thought to speak better than I ever did before. I answer'd Grenville, and Mr Pitt, who answer'd me, complimented me very highly: a great honour! which I had shew'd no desire of attaining, and therefore had. Harry Legge likewise and Ld Coke spoke very well on our side. And Ld Cornbury, who began the debate and mov'd the amendment, spoke in his way a good speech, but very long and very deliberate indeed. I can't give you a better idea of Cornbury's and Pitt's speeches than by telling you what Glanville<sup>1</sup> said of one, and Ellis of the other. Glanville was asked in the Speaker's Chamber who was speaking. 'Nobody,' says he, 'is speaking; Ld Cornbury is firing his minute guns.' Ellis, whilst Pitt was both ranting and ridiculing the City, observ'd that in *The Rehearsal* Mr Smith says to Bayes, 'Is this wise, Mr Bayes?' 'No,' says Bayes, 'but it is very great.'

"How is Pitt's conduct to be accounted for, you'll ask? To divide against both courts, abuse the City, leave the D. of Bedford, Ld Gower and ev'n Cobham, who in the Cabinet was for the Hessians, in a point not at all a Tory point, and knowing that he should not divide more than he did, which was 44 only; making thus a bad figure and blinking his own ambitious views when he was quite sure of them, is conduct difficult to guess the motives of. I heard, perhaps in jest, but I earnestly believe it, that the Dss of Queensbury flatters and influences him into it. I should have added that ev'n Lyttelton voted indeed with them, but sat silent and uneasy."<sup>2</sup>

Parliament reassembled after Christmas, on January 14. A few days earlier Pitt had reopened negotiations with the Government through Cobham, who formulated to Newcastle certain demands. A trifling amendment to the address was moved by the Tories in "the dullest debate" Fox ever knew.<sup>3</sup> Their chief object, he thought, was to inconvenience Pitt.

<sup>1</sup> Member for Hythe.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, December 21, 1745. Compare also H. Walpole to H. Mann, December 20 (*Letters*, ii, 164), which seems to be the only other contemporary account of this debate on December 19.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, January 14, 1746.

"Hume Campbell mov'd the amendment, seconded by Sr Watkin. It was ill executed, but the scheme seem'd to be to shew the inconsistency of Mr Pitt and hamper the future behaviour of him and his coterie, who (I think) are returned to amicable parley, and, if I mistake not, in contradistinction more than ever to Torys. My quick execution would have made this impossible. Whether that had been better or no cannot yet be said, as the treaty is scarce enter'd into yet, and as it must, I think, be a question whether they mean to be courtiers with a much worse grace than they might have been so 3 months ago, or whether they only mean to come back to fetch Bedford, Gower, &c., away with them upon their next *evolution*.

"Pitt spoke short and rather well, to put us in mind that he always said he was not for abandoning our allys ; that this address meant no more, and that all opposition to manner or measure of that support was as open as ever."

On the 17th, Lord Cornbury moved for "an account of such instances as had been made by the Dutch to his Majesty." He was seconded by Sir Francis Dashwood. "Pelham, Winnington and Solicitor spoke. Ld Cornbury, Sr Fs Dashwood and Carey reply'd. Pitt, Lyttelton, Dodington, Oswald and even Hume Campbell were absent, whether by chance or design I know not. Division about 5 in the afternoon. Ayes 73, No's 193, or thereabouts. I am not exact in the numbers."<sup>1</sup>

The reference to the Dutch which the Government had induced the King to insert in his Speech, was a promise to co-operate with them, "to the utmost of my power, according to the circumstances of my own dominions." This bound the country to nothing specific, and was therefore acceptable to Pitt. In the conditions which he had this time put forward, he demanded the Secretaryship-at-War for himself, and certain appointments for Cobham's dependents. Newcastle relates that the King would not countenance Pitt in that office under any conditions.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, January 18, 1746.

To the other proposals he raised no objection.<sup>1</sup> He was encouraged in his refusal by Lord Bath, who had recently been readmitted to the royal counsels, and was feeling about for an opportunity to dislodge his foes.

“ I had a very serious but very friendly discourse with Mr Pelham Sunday morning, and we parted good friends. The K. (and I don't wonder at it, for a demand so particular and so peremptory is insolent beyond sufferance) would fain refuse to swallow Pitt. All Pelham's enemys aggravate and spirit up His M. on this point ; and I have been this morning try'd (but in vain you may believe). I can't by letter explain the manner. I suppose this week Pitt will be Secretary-at-War, or H.M. must have a *newish* Cabinet Council. The first will be the case.”<sup>2</sup>

But matters could not be thus easily adjusted.

“ The K. yesterday absolutely refus'd Pitt, and vows he will never consent but publish the hard insult offer'd him in ev'ry market town in his dominion, etc., and I believe it is really thought desperate. . . . My behaviour on this occasion has quite effaced my late offence. If we should all go out, it would be odd, when Winnington and I were ask'd why we resigned, to hear us answer, ' Because Pitt is not Secretary-at-War.' ”<sup>3</sup>

Pitt now offered to renounce his claim to the coveted post ; but the King remained firm, thinking that he foresaw emancipation in the near future from the ministers whom he detested. They had, however, again forestalled him. Fortified by an agreement with the Cobham section, whereby neither party would resume office without the other, the Pelhams and their friends resigned in a body on February 10. Granville, who had been in the background throughout, and Bath, had already been given

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Chesterfield, February 18, 1746 (*Pelham Administration*, ii. 292).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, February 4, 1746.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, February 6, 1746.



*carte blanche* to form an Administration. But it would not do. Harrington, on whose assistance they had counted, refused to come in, much to George's disgust. Winnington declined the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, with a few outspoken remarks upon the nature of the venture; and the numbers of their supporters in Parliament were all too scanty for success. Bath's Ministry was over in two days, before it had begun; and Winnington was sent to tell Pelham that the King would take him back on his own terms.

The new, or rather the old, Ministry were merciful in their hour of triumph. Pitt was made Joint-Vice-Treasurer of Ireland; and, though some removals were inevitable, the King's wishes were on the whole respected. Fox's views on the proscriptions are of interest, in the light of later days. This time he was acting only as an accessory, not as a principal.

"They will have the grace and sense not to mention Pitt as Secretary-at-War, nor do I believe they will insist on the Finches leaving their places if His Majesty thinks, as I hear he do's, that it is too indecent violence to rummage his Bedchamber. I like all this, and ev'ry mark they can give of respect to H.M.; but I would have them unmerciful to their own false friends. Mr Scrope and H. Fane, who could enough forget their obligations to Sr R. Walpole to engage early and slyly wth Pulteney in this matter, I would not spare. Ld Middlesex as little. And if, as I hear, Dodington and Waller both offer'd their service to Ld Bath, I see no excuse for them. And I believe it is so, and known to be so. Ld Cholmondley, his poverty and Hor. Walpole will save; they should not, were I Pelham, who has now more absolute power and with more grace than ever man had in this country. 'No Pelham, no money,' was the City cry, and they actually renounced their bargain, tho' an advantageous one, for the three millions to be raised." <sup>1</sup>

We must here again allude to the subject of the

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, February 13, 1746.

"noble" regiments, which was raised in the Commons on January 31. The period of their enlistment was drawing to a close, and an extension of time was proposed. Fox took a leading part in the debate, which he thus describes :

"I am in more disgrace than ever, and I don't know what it may not be a prelude to. Yesterday, Mr Pelham with Yonge resolv'd in the Committee to vote the noble regiments a continuance of 8 months longer, without any fresh estimate or notice to anybody. I heard of it, and tho' sick, went down and mov'd that the certificates of their being half complete, the muster rolls of them, and the reports of general officers who had review'd them, if any, should be laid before the House. This was debated, the previous question put, and we lost it all to nothing, not above 8 or 9 of us Old Corps people voting with the Torys, making up the 89, against 170. Delay was opposition, and no opposition to the name of a soldier in time of rebellion was to be borne. This, I think, was the sum of their argument ; while I protested I wanted only to stay till I saw these papers, and then continue such as were near expiring, and leave the others to be continued when they should be so, if the rebellion should not then be over. The debate was not extraordinary, nor at all offensive, tho' my last speech was a good one ; but I see it is excessively ill taken that I would come down to oppose, as they call it, these regts in this time of danger ; forgetting how offensive it is, and unfair in them to hurry them in, for fear the rebellion (which they say *is*, and I know is *not*, to determine the fate of them) should not afford the same argument for them a fortnight hence as it do's now.

"We went into the Committee, when Sr Wm Yonge graciously told us we should have the motion for 4 or for 8 months, as the Committee lik'd best. I seconded Sr Jn Phillips, who mov'd for 2 months, as agreeable to the articles these soldiers 'listed under, because the Parliament would be sitting at the end of them, and because we should then be all of a mind, since if the rebellion were not then over, it must of certainty be so formidable that we should all be for the continuance of these regiments. Then

Yonge got up, and since we were not content with 4, he said he would move for 8, and did so. Then we were desir'd to retract our motion, and it should be 4. We did so, but I said I suppos'd I was at liberty to speak my mind upon it at the Report. Then Yonge and Pelham, one after another, said, No, that must be part of the condition too. Yonge own'd there was some foundation of reason for 2 months, but it must be 4, and if that was accepted it was not to be disputed at the Report. So we agreed to that too, and sō it was four. I leave you to comment on this strange proceeding, which you and nobody else who sees this letter, will understand why I am so particular in my account of. I saw Mr Pelham at White's to-day, when he was as formal and behav'd as to Ld Berkley of Stratton now, or hardly so easy.

“ I shall go to him to-morrow.”<sup>1</sup>

These regiments were finally disbanded in June after the rebellion was over. Fox, as Secretary-at-War, then penned the proclamation conveying the King's thanks to officers and men.

It has already been related how Charles Edward reached Derby early in December. He had given Cumberland's army the slip, and the way to London lay practically open. The utmost consternation prevailed in the metropolis. A run on the Bank of England was with difficulty averted. We read of Fox's arrangements to secure the safety of his own plate and that of his brother. Yet the dreaded advance never took place. The Highlanders yearned for their native fastnesses, and retreat, contrary to the Prince's wish, became the order of the day. By the 20th, they had re-entered Scotland, with the King's forces close on their heels. General Hawley, however, received a serious check on January 17, at Falkirk, and it remained for Cumberland to make an end of the rebellion. Raising the siege of Stirling early in February, he took steps to garrison the South of Scotland behind

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, February 1, 1746 Compare H. Walpole to H. Mann (*Letters*, ii. 173)

him with Hessian troops. He then advanced north with the whole British force under his command, and met Charles at Culloden Moor on April 16. The result of the battle was decisive, and the Stuart cause was lost for all time.



## CHAPTER VII

WITHIN a few days of Pelham's return to power Fox resolved to suggest that something should be done for his brother. Whether the object of Ilchester's desire was place or rank, does not transpire. The King had given him, three years before, a definite promise with regard to a step in the peerage.

"I have taken this opportunity to press Mr Pelham by speech, and since by letter, for you, with ev'ry reason I could urge, and all the weight that my present favour with him and my assurance of taking it as something done for me, and more pleasantly and more usefully done for me, than any promotion of myself could give me.

"I wish it may have effect, and cannot but hope it will some other time, if, as I fear, too timid behaviour should not create openings enough for you to slip in now

"He said you was well with the Duke of Newcastle, who must, I suppose, do it when it is done. And I told him, I, who would never go to his Grace on any other score while I liv'd, would willingly, on this, go and thank him heartily."<sup>1</sup>

Pelham's reply was cold, but Fox did not consider it altogether unfavourable. He assured his brother that the request would not affect his own position adversely. "On no account need you fear your preferment being an hindrance to mine. That can't happen. Mine may prevent yours. But were you preferr'd to-day, any advancement of mine, which cannot come from any claim in me but from some fancy'd convenience to themselves

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, February 15, 1746.

or inclination to me in those who confer it, would not be delay'd an hour for it."

It was hardly to be expected that the relations between the King and his ministers—the "*mariage forcé*," as Fox termed it—were likely to be cordial. Harrington, especially, George never forgave, for his conduct in February.<sup>1</sup> Fox furnishes us with a new explanation of that episode.

"At first, 'twas said, he<sup>2</sup> lost his temper, and flung the seals upon the table angrily when he resign'd them, and behav'd indecently. And *sur ce ton* he was dislik'd for some days, but it was deny'd on his side; and much *éclaircissement* was threaten'd. But at last the truth came out. 'Ld Harr. had personally affronted him, and it never should be forgiven'! 'Good God! how so? How could that happen?' Why, the K. had talk'd of countermanding the Hessians, and it was in a manner agreed to on a Wednesday, but without Ld H.'s consent. On Thursday morning, Boetslaer<sup>3</sup> went to Ld H. and talked of it. Ld H. said they had been address'd for by Parlt, that countermanding them was not a thing in the present circumstances he should advise or durst set his hand to, and believ'd the K. would be persuaded not to countermand their coming. Boetslaer go's from Ld H. to court. The K. at his levee tells him the Hessians would be countermanded. Boetslaer makes no answer. The King repeats it. Boetslaer shakes his head, and tells him he comes from Ld H., who says they would not. Ld H. comes to court, convinces the K., and they are not countermanded; but, 'He was exposed to this affront at his levee,' etc. And indeed, in strictness, Ld H. should have convinc'd H.M., before he imparted his design to convince him so peremptorily to Boetslaer."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The name of Stanhope had always sufficed to set George II's teeth on edge, owing to certain disrespectful expressions used towards him by some member of the family when he was still Prince of Wales. Harrington, moreover, had made himself especially offensive to him, by his anti-Hanoverian policy. (Sichel's *Bolingbroke: The Sequel*, p. 280.)

<sup>2</sup> Harrington.

<sup>3</sup> The Dutch Envoy-Extraordinary.

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, March 29, 1746.

Differences of opinion, too, between Pelham and Newcastle, particularly in the matter of foreign policy, were becoming more and more accentuated. The Duke's ceaseless jealousy of his brother was a cause of constant bickering between them. Pelham, too weak in character and too indolent in disposition, was often content to let things slide in the hope of peace and quiet. Thus by degrees he was losing the power which was solely his by the right of office, and was in time forced to support, and indeed take the responsibility for, measures in which he did not concur.

On the other hand, Pitt was drawing closer every day to the court. "I come from a coalition dinner at Pelham's, wch pass'd off very cheerfully, consisting of Pitt, Lyttelton, Barrington, and the two eldest Grenvilles, Pelham, Yonge, Winnington, Legge and me."<sup>1</sup> Other dinners followed at Grenville's house and elsewhere; and with Pitt's *volte-face* perished, for the moment, the last remnants of organised opposition in Parliament. Even Granville had come to an understanding with Pelham.<sup>2</sup> Public extravagance went unchecked for the next few years, and the dullness of debates in the Commons bears witness to the cloud of apathy which had fallen upon that assembly.

The shock of Winnington's death, in April, was very severely felt by the Foxs. Though a few years their elder, he had shared their play and their politics, their leisure and their labours. "A most agreeable and valuable person," wrote Ilchester, "extremely regretted by every one who had the least knowledge of him."<sup>3</sup> Henry looked upon his life as thrown away. His illness was a rheumatic fever, which should have yielded to ordinary treatment. His sister, however, had entrusted him to Dr Thompson, a quack, who mismanaged the case.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, March 4, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> Von Ruville's *Life of Pitt*, i, 281.

<sup>3</sup> Melbury Game Books.

Winnington's friend, Dr Broxholme, whom Fox sent to him, was either too old or too ignorant to stand up to Thompson and insist on the proper remedies, and Dr Hulse, also at Fox's summons, only arrived too late to be of use.

Winnington's vacancy at the Pay Office was filled by Pitt. Sir William Yonge, whose health had begun to fail under the weight of years, was relegated to the Irish sinecure which the latter was surrendering, and Henry Fox took his place as Secretary-at-War. It was without apparent enthusiasm that the new minister undertook the task. Accustomed to a life of comparative freedom, he looked forward to the routine and drudgery of the War Office with dismay. Writing on June 11, in answer to a letter of congratulation from Sir Edward Fawkener, private secretary to the Duke of Cumberland, who, as Commander-in-Chief, was now to be his immediate superior, he said :

" I shrunk from the employment as long as I could, and find ev'ry day more and more that I had good reason for so doing. But I must now go on and do, without complaining; and, should I be so fortunate as in time to make my service in this station acceptable to H.R.H., I assure you I shall never, even in private, regret the loss of ease and leisure, which is the worse for me for my having all my life time indulged myself too much in both."

Yonge was disappointed at not receiving the Pay Office ; and Fox seems to have thrown longing glances at a half share in that lucrative post for himself. He would have preferred the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, or still more the Treasurership of the Navy, to the War Office.

" Yonge's present resolution is not to continue where he is, and then I fear I must take it, to quarrel with the army, and hated, as I already am, by the Duke, to do business from morning to night. . . . I will use all en-



deavours to avert this, and yet it's coming to me as it were by necessity, may make it better. . . . I am, no doubt, throughout us'd excessively, prodigiously well and kindly both by K. and ministers."<sup>1</sup>

Before the post was finally offered to Fox, Newcastle approached the Duke of Richmond<sup>2</sup> to ascertain his views on the advancement of his son-in-law. The Duke did his best to stop the appointment, subsequently qualifying his opposition by the statement that he thought other vacant offices more desirable. He ceased his objections, however, when it was pointed out to him that no one else was so suitable. Newcastle promised to arrange that the Duke should never have to do business personally with Fox. He assured him, too, that it was only necessity which made him propose one so distasteful to his Grace. "I believe that Mr Fox does not think me partial to him, or that he is Secretary-at-War by my means."

By May 10, Fox had finally accepted the offer, stipulating that he should not take up his new duties until after a hurried visit to Redlynch. He kissed the King's hand on May 27, and was re-elected without opposition at Windsor a few days later. He estimated his expenses there to be "something under £400." The Prince of Wales took occasion to show him special favour when he went to Carlton House to kiss his hand. A complication had arisen about the audience. Frederick had ordered mourning for the Princess's brother-in-law, but the King forbade his servants to observe the command.

"Hence arose a difficulty to me, and I desir'd by Lord Darnley to know whether I might come in colours, or must defer the great honour of kissing His Royal Highness' hand till the mourning was out. Upon which I was sent

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, April 29, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> Richmond held the post of Master of the Horse, which at that time carried with it a seat in the Cabinet.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Richmond, May 8, 1746 (Add. MSS. 32,707).

for in private, talk'd to with Lord Darnley  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour, in the garden *tête-à-tête*  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour more; introduced by him himself to the Princess. All he had taken ill of me told, and explanations receiv'd most graciously; all branches of politics, foreign and domestic, treated of."<sup>1</sup>

On the Continent the French had not failed to take advantage of the preoccupation of Great Britain. Brussels was captured, and an invasion of Holland looked probable before spring had far advanced. Pelham's demands for foreign supplies and subsidies were laid before Parliament on April 10. Sums of £400,000 were to be granted to Austria, £300,000 to the King of Sardinia, and £310,000 set aside to retain 18,000 Hanoverians in British pay. The debate takes historic rank from Pitt's speech, in which he supported these proposals. He was finally and definitely shedding his old skin, and was to burst upon the world in new colours. "We sat till 11 last night. Pitt spoke, I thought very indifferently, relating to his own conduct. Dr Lee made a good insulting and provoking speech upon it, to which Pitt reply'd not well at all, and Mr Pelham very angrily."<sup>2</sup> A further debate took place on April 14, when the House went into Committee:

"Yesterday we had another long day in the House. Ld Guernsey, Carey, Sr J. Phillips and others, talk'd of Pitt's inconsistency, &c., and the first of them very well. Pitt, conscious how ill he had done before, and prepar'd for it, made the finest speech I ever heard. He said among other things, that as he had oppos'd strenuously, so he would now support. That he was now with a set of men with whom he should ever think it an honour to act, and that he should not act with them falsely, hollowly or coldly. And as for those he had left, you cannot imagine with what contempt he treated them in a strain of good-humour'd, contemptuous raillery, but putting

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, June 3, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 12, 1746.

them on the foot of children and idiots. In short, all that could be said to reconcile himself to our corps, either by strong encomium of us or thorough ridicule of our adversaries, was there ; and it was mix'd with so much judicious argument to make out his own consistency, as made a much better defence for himself than you who did not hear it can believe ; and tho' I don't say you would have thought he quite made it out, yet you would have confess'd it as great a performance as ever you did hear.

“ There were many odd things besides in the debate, but as the Speaker, Hor. Walpole and Cornwall were the authors of these incidents, there is no repeating them.”<sup>1</sup>

The discussions, during the month of June, of subjects relating to the war in Flanders, only brought to light more clearly the impotence of the Opposition, and the fact that Newcastle was becoming more and more bellicose. In like ratio, his influence and favour increased with the King. But no assistance which England could give to the allies was sufficient to stay the victorious career of France, and by the end of the campaign the whole of the Austrian Netherlands were in her hands.

In Italy, however, a totally different state of affairs prevailed. Austrian troops, freed by the Treaty of Dresden, had been poured over the Alps to assist the Sardinians. Their combined armies were everywhere successful. The death of Philip V of Spain, further, put a new complexion on the foreign policy of his country. The new King, Ferdinand VI, inclined to pacific measures, and commenced overtures to England. Holland, in her character of a neutral State, retained her diplomatic relations with France, and took advantage of this to initiate negotiations for peace, into which England seemed anxious to enter. Breda was the place appointed for the discussions. Lord Sandwich, a friend and adherent of the Duke of Bedford, was despatched there as the British

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, April 15, 1746.

representative, but little real progress was made during the year 1746 towards an accommodation.

As a matter of fact, serious divergences of opinion had arisen in the Cabinet. Harrington, fearing the Dutch might conclude a separate arrangement with the French, favoured peace. Chesterfield in Ireland concurred, and Pelham was in agreement with them. In the opposite camp were Newcastle and Hardwicke, who received the whole measure of George's support, and temporarily had their way.

"The D. of Newcastle is as well with the K. as any man ever was; Lord Harrington ill, and in order to be better, if I mistake not, striking in with Lord Granville. Mr Pelham peaceable, and triumph'd over by his bror for such notions, while his Grace's warlike disposition as well as Ld Chancellor's proceeds merely from the fear of giving up Cap Breton, which by all accounts from thence is neither to be kept, nor worth keeping, unless pursu'd by the conquest of all the other northern French settlements." <sup>1</sup>

Harrington's relations with Newcastle, his brother Secretary of State, became so impossible that he threw up his post. Chesterfield, whose success in Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant had been very marked, took his place, although their views on peace and war were almost identical.

"Lord Harrington resign'd this morning, to the great satisfaction of H.M. and the D. of Newc., I hear, and to the equal concern of Mr Pelham, who was at the time endeavouring to prevent it. Ld Chesterfield, who came

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, September 3, 1746. Louisberg in Cape Breton had been captured from the French in 1745, by Commodore Warren, aided by 4,000 colonists. An expedition under General St Clair was planned in 1746, to co-operate for an attack upon the French settlements on the river St Lawrence. By the time the fleet was prepared, the season of the year was too far advanced to favour a reasonable chance of success, and the force was diverted to a futile attack upon l'Orient, on the coast of France.



from Bath but yesterday, I understand, immediately accepted the offer of succeeding him, and that too surprises some people, not me. 'Why, he,' say they, 'has declar'd more for peace than anybody.' And if Harrn could not live with such a br. Secretary, how can he? Where is his shame, his stability, in taking so quick a turn, if he becomes warlike? His judgment, if he takes the seals on any other footing?'"<sup>1</sup>

An undignified scramble took place for the vacant Lord-Lieutenancy. The Duke of Dorset thought some promise had been made to him, and was strongly supported by the King, out of spite for the other candidate, Harrington, who was ultimately successful.

"It is not, I believe, out of love to the Duke of Dorset that the King inclines to make him L.-Lieut. of Ireland. . . . If it go's in favour of Dorset, never was measure more freely and generally abus'd, and a scandalous thing 'twill be indeed. Ev'ry circumstance looks as if H.M. was artfully taking advantage of the passions and dirtiness of some great men to destroy that union among them, which he was made so uneasy by in the spring."<sup>2</sup>

Newcastle tried to arrange matters by offering Harrington the Presidentship of the Council, but finally induced Dorset to forego his claim.

Fox and his elder brother seem to have taken different sides on the great question of the day.

"You with your warlike real opinion, I think, must make your fortune if you would come and vent it properly here. . . . Ev'rybody must agree, however, that war being determin'd, it cannot be with too much vigour, or too soon prepar'd for, and with that spirit I shall go into the H. of Commons next Tuesday, leaving the determination for war to be justify'd by the many who know more of it, and hope more from it, than I can possibly."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, October 28, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, November 4, 1746.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, November 11, 1746.

Fox looked on peace as a necessity. He saw no other means of retarding the victorious advance of the French.

Partial success attended his efforts on his brother's behalf, and incidentally on his own, before the end of the year. The earldom which Ilchester desired was not forthcoming, but a new barony was granted to him, with remainder to Henry Fox and his sons.<sup>1</sup> He had further hoped for some employment, the emoluments of which, he told Henry, would be very useful to him. His affairs were at that time in an embarrassed position. Mortgages on his wife's estates were about to be called in. "The present war and occasions of the Government have not only rais'd the interest of money, but sunk the clear profits arising from land."

Henry proposed to give him half the salary of his Secretaryship, but the offer was gratefully refused.

"I am very much obliged to you for the affection you express to me in your last letter, particularly for your kind proposal in assisting me with half the profits of your employment. But let me beseech you never to mention anything of that sort to me again: not but that I shall be extremely glad to hear you save at least £700 a year. But whatever you do save, for God's sake save it for your children; they may or may not want it, 'tis more than you or I can tell; but your only opportunity of saving for them is while they are young. Had you follow'd my advice when you was made Surveyor of the Works, by this time you might have laid a good foundation of a fortune. If you should be out of place your circumstances would be very straight, and your place is but precarious."<sup>2</sup>

Fox became a Privy Councillor in July. Details of administrative organisation at the War Office necessitated a heavy expenditure of time and labour. Hanbury-

<sup>1</sup> The Ilchesters' family consisted of three daughters. Their eldest son was not born till 1747.

<sup>2</sup> Ilchester to H. Fox, July 26, 1746. Lord Ilchester was appointed a Comptroller of the Accounts of the Army in June 1747. (Game Books.)

Williams feared that the strain might be too much for his friend's health. "Pray take care of yourself. You love home and your family, and that makes you keep good hours, which is a great deal towards health. But from what I see of you this summer, I don't conceive how you can go thro' the office, the closet and the House of Commons in the winter." He had, besides, to attend to the duties of the Commander-in-Chief, whenever he was absent on service, as well as his own.

The office of Secretary-at-War dates back to the reign of Charles II. The original occupant of the post was a civilian, appointed to accompany the King or General Officer commanding the troops in the field. He was, in fact, secretary to the Commander-in-Chief. By 1676, certain duties as to quartering, relief of corps, despatch of convoys, etc., had been placed upon his shoulders, thus initiating a system of civil control over military matters. After 1691 the Secretary-at-War remained at home, no longer accompanying the Commander-in-Chief to the wars. He became the civil head of the War Department; and the original definition of his duties, that he should obey such orders as he should from time to time receive from the King or from the General commanding the Forces for the time being, was in effect reversed. Owing to the prolonged absence abroad of the Commander-in-Chief in Queen Anne's reign, the powers and jurisdiction of the office were much extended, and the Secretary-at-War grew to act largely on his own initiative. During Pulteney's tenure of the office from 1714 to 1717 he refused to accept a minister's responsibility, and the Secretary of State for the Home Department<sup>1</sup> was called upon to sign documents which were purely military in character. This arrangement continued until a new custom arose, that the Secretary-at-War should correspond directly with officers of all grades indiscriminately, and

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* for the Northern Department, in which the control of home affairs was vested.

should fill vacancies without any communication with the colonels of regiments. Nothing more subversive of discipline than this practice can be imagined, nor one more calculated to encourage officers to look for advancement solely to the personal good-will of the civil head of the army.

Such was the state of affairs when Cumberland became Commander-in-Chief in 1745. Throughout his career he was unsuccessful as a leader of men in the field. But, though still in his twenty-fifth year, his value as an administrator soon became apparent. His special talents were eminently fitted for such work. He put down with a strong hand the abuses which were prevalent among all ranks of the army, and by degrees remodelled the conditions under which commissions were granted and appointments made. After the Peace of Aix, he set himself to reconstruct the War Office, and relegated the office of Secretary-at-War to its original status. For the first two years, however, of Fox's tenure of the post this reorganisation was in its earliest stages, and Cumberland himself was often abroad. In his absence, the Secretary-at-War was in direct communication with the King and Secretaries of State on matters which would, at other times, have been decided by the Commander-in-Chief. Fox, therefore, had his hands full, and his position proved no sinecure.

On December 5, the Army Estimates were introduced by him in the House of Commons. The abolition of two troops of life-guards, and a reduction of three regiments of horse to dragoons,<sup>1</sup> calculated to save some £60,000 a year, was the only important proposal which he put forward.

<sup>1</sup> They became the First, Second, and Third Dragoon Guards. *Dragoons* were mounted infantry, *Horse* were cavalry. The pay of all ranks of the Horse was higher than that of the Dragoons, and their mounts better and more expensive.

We are indebted for this and for many other details of army administration to the Hon. J. W. Fortescue's *History of the British Army*.



This desire on the King's part for economy was well received by the Commons, who voted him an address of thanks.

" This causes much surprize and great applause in the H. of Commons and in the world in general ; as much surprize, but no applause, in the army. They know nobody but the King could touch the H. Guards ; they know the Duke's opinion ; and they know me only ready to obey (not the adviser, tho' highly approving the measure). And yet I assure you I am reckon'd the devil of a Secretary-at-War. They do me a great deal of honour ; 'tis greatly right, and I never tasted my place till now. By the way, H.M. is more gracious than ever, and that is owing to the Duke, with whom I am come slowly, but, I hope, surely, into great favour. He is gone to Holland, and left me in the midst of this outrageous work, which must be done before the 25th inst." <sup>1</sup>

A week later Fox wrote again to his brother :

" Many think the old, or a less daring, Secretary-at-War would have fought this scheme off, but that I encourage it. Those who dislike it and don't care to blame higher people, blame me. The army chiefly ; but, to give them their due, now the first surprize is over, the thing right, generally thought so, and a disposition shewn to relieve at some expense for some time the hard cases that arise, have made them behave very well under it. I think I have disbanded Oglethorpe's Rangers too, and, if so, that is indeed my doing. The other, you may believe, I was only the willing instrument of in H.M. and H.R.H.'s hands." <sup>2</sup>

The Foxs had been searching for a residence within reach of London, and decided, during the summer of 1746, upon taking a lease of Holland House, the property of William Edwardes, who was subsequently, in 1776, created Lord Kensington. The house had originally been erected in the reign of James I, by Sir Walter Cope. At

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, December 4, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, December 11, 1746.

his death it passed to his daughter, Isabella, who married Sir Henry Rich, Earl of Holland. Their son, Robert, inherited the additional title of Earl of Warwick from his cousin in 1673; but, upon the death of the last of the direct line in 1721, the whole property passed to this William Edwardes, his first cousin. The titles devolved upon another relative, at whose decease in 1759 they became extinct. Holland House seems to have been in bad repair at this time. An allusion to it appears in *A Tour Through England* in 1748, and the statement that it "had long since been decaying." The author adds: "It seems that this famous old house, the residence of the Earls of Warwick, was deserted; but the present possessor has restored it, repaired and beautified it, embellished the gardens, enclosed the park, and made a coach road into Acton Road, and a coach-way through his own grounds from the turnpike to the house. He is daily improving the delightful situation."

Apparently, after 1721, the house had been let out in apartments. Mrs Morice, Bishop Atterbury's daughter, lived there. Shippen was for a time an inmate, and Lechmere, the Whig lawyer, died there in 1727.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Kensington still lay in the midst of open fields. The roads which connected it with the metropolis were often, as late as 1800, deep in mud, and were infested with footpads. To live at Holland House, and to combine country life with the daily cares of office, was impossible. An additional residence in town was therefore essential for the busy politician.

Fox's first care, as usual, was for his brother. Even before the lease was signed, he offered Ilchester a room in his new mansion. Hanbury-Williams was likewise favoured. "I have ordered my upholsterer to get my room in order at Holland House, where I'm sure of being pleased and happy." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir C. Hanbury-Williams to H. Fox, July 12, 1746.

Lady Caroline's second son, Henry Charles, born on October 8, 1746, only lived two months. It was some solace to the bereaved mother when, a month later, her favourite sister, Emily, married Lord Kildare. She had stipulated with her future husband for that freedom of intercourse with Lady Caroline, which had long been refused by her parents. Kildare raised no objection, and the sisters resumed their habits of intimacy and affection, which had been so rudely interrupted.

No speech from Fox's lips is referred to during 1747. His time was fully employed in the duties of his office. The absence of Cumberland on the Continent throughout the year threw additional responsibility upon his shoulders. In the autumn he was reported seriously ill, but wrote on September 12 to Richard Bateman: "I am quite well, except a very little remainder of St Anthony's fire in my leg. I was never so bad as the papers made me, tho' enough so to alarm my friends here for a day or two." A gnat's bite on his leg was the original cause of the trouble.<sup>1</sup>

Two victories at sea were the only British successes of the year. In the Low Countries the French again manifested their superiority by advancing into Holland, and by overrunning Dutch Brabant. The Dutch rose against their existing Government in May, and revived the Stadtholdership in favour of the Prince of Orange. With Cumberland in command, the Allies were defeated, in July, at Laffeldt near Maestricht, by Marshal Saxe accompanied by Louis XV. The capture at this battle of Lord Ligonier, the leader of the British cavalry, led to important consequences. Saxe opened negotiations through him, and the issue of their informal conversations on the subject finally resulted in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Pelham and the majority of the Cabinet were sincerely desirous of terminating the war, the futility of which was becoming more and more apparent. Fox

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Anson, July 26, 1747 (S.P. Dom. Military 18, Record Office).

himself thought peace the only hope of safety for the country. But Newcastle was as opposed as ever to an accommodation, and was supported by the King and Cumberland. The latter aspired to wipe out his defeats, and looked to the ensuing campaign for the opportunity. Notwithstanding the appointment of a Congress at Aix, to consider the question of peace, the Estimates for 1748 rose to over £13,000,000, the largest sum voted in one year since the reign of Queen Anne. The employment of 30,000 Russian auxiliaries was sanctioned, in addition to the usual complement of troops.

Newcastle and Pelham were now on worse terms than ever. Andrew Stone, the former's secretary, had become the principal channel of communication between them. Yet the threat of a new Opposition, which the Prince of Wales had been planning with the help of the Tories, was sufficient to hold the Government forces together. Parliament was unexpectedly dissolved on June 18, in order to frustrate his schemes. The result of the elections was perfectly satisfactory to Pelham and his friends. Fox was again returned unopposed for Windsor. He had taken upon his shoulders the management of several contests in the West of England, and had ample opportunity of proving his talent for such employment. The opening of the session brought with it a batch of election petitions, which gave further scope for his assiduity. "Droitwich and Bedwin," wrote Hanbury-Williams, "are in all my letters, but the latter is talk'd of as a masterpiece, and the work of your single hand."<sup>1</sup> The debate on the Bedwyn petition seems to have been a pretty fight, which lasted for over a week in the Commons. "Bedwin has almost killed me. . . . It is over after long debate. We were 175 against 93. Lyttelton and 3 or 4 more were squeamish upon bribery, on which acct it was contended to be a void election."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir C. Hanbury-Williams to H. Fox, February 4, 1748

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, December 15, 1747.



In February Chesterfield resigned his Secretaryship. He had tried to break down George's personal dislike, but all in vain. Believing that he could be of no further use to the state, he retired into private life. Newcastle and Cumberland were anxious for Lord Sandwich to step into the vacancy, but the former thought that the Duke of Bedford should have the first offer of the post, expecting that he would refuse. On the contrary, he accepted the offer, nominally for six months, when he promised to hand over the seals to his friend Sandwich. "He says so," wrote Fox, "perhaps intends it, but all the world agrees won't do it."<sup>1</sup>

Fox was looked upon by the public as a probable successor to Chesterfield. He himself had no delusions on the subject. Doubtless, however, he was pleased that his value in the political world was generally so highly assessed.

"I may be content with the honour of being nam'd and the number of people, middling and great, that wish it me, which is surprizing enough and a little flattering, which I like; but the greatest people of all have other designs."<sup>1</sup>

Richmond would have welcomed his son-in-law's advancement. "I have but one word to trouble you with, which is to tell you that if Harry Fox should be Secretary of State, the Duchess of Richmond and I should be vastly happy, tho' we still wish him the Paymaster's place, as it is less precarious and a better thing for his family's sake."<sup>2</sup> The prominence of Fox's situation was paving the way for that reconciliation between the Richmonds and their daughter which took place six weeks later.

Fox's own estimate of his position, written to Hanbury-Williams, should also be quoted<sup>3</sup>:

"The Duke of Newcastle declared early he would name

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady C. Fox, February 6, 1748.

<sup>2</sup> Richmond to Newcastle, February 12, 1748, Add. MSS. 32,714.

<sup>3</sup> February 17, 1748 (Coxe's *Pelham Administration*, i. 391).

nobody : Mr Pelham said the same. Hence standers-by named everybody, and, among the rest, me. All Sandwich's enemies were my friends, or, to express it better than by the word *enemies*, those who wished him not to succeed ; as it would be too strong a declaration in favour of the warlike system. Joined to these, who were numerous and of rank at court, the voice of the House of Commons was much in my favour, and of none more loudly than Lyttelton, Pitt, etc. I flatter myself that, from personal affection too, I had more active friends than I could have imagined, or is usual : and this has been a pleasure to me."

Anson, indeed, wrote to Sandwich that he thought that Fox would push both brothers whenever he saw a fair opportunity. Sandwich's answer took the form of a shrewd prophecy of the limitations which were in the future to qualify the success of Fox's political career. " I agree with you in what you say about the gentleman, that he does not want ambition or any qualities to raise a man in our Government. But that is not enough, as I am sure he wants more qualities necessary to maintain himself after his rise, so that it would be much more easy for him to pull down than to build. However, I hope we shall put ourselves out of his reach."

In dealing with the contradictions and intricacies of Fox's character, an essay, in Horace Walpole's hand, written about this time to Lady Caroline, may not come amiss.<sup>1</sup>

" STRAWBERRY HILL, 1748.

" MADAM,

" I have been attempting to draw a picture of one of your friends, and I think I have in some degree succeeded ; but as I fear natural partiality may make me flatter myself, I choose to submit to your judgment, whose prepossession for the person represented is likely to balance what fondness I may have for my own perform-

<sup>1</sup> Waller MSS. The sketch was printed in an extraordinary number of *The World* at the end of 1756, without any revision. Walpole speaks of it as " a genuine careless letter."

ances. As I believe you love the person concerned as much as ever other people love themselves the medium between the faults you shall find and the justness that I see in the following portrait, is likely to be an exact image.

"The gentleman I am going to draw is about three-and-forty; as you see all the fondness and delicacy and attention of a lover in him, perhaps your Ladyship may take him to be but three-and-twenty but I whose talent is not to flatter and who from his judgment and experience and authority should at first set him down for three-score, upon the strictest enquiry can only allow him to be in the vigour of his age and understanding. His person decides rather on my side for tho' he has all the ease and amiableness of youth, yet your Ladyship must allow that it has a dignity in it which youth might aim at in vain, and will scarce ever be exchanged for. If I were like common painters, I should give him a ruddy, healthful complexion, and light up his countenance with insipid, aimless and unmeaning benevolence. But this would not be a faithful portrait! A florid bloom would no more give one an idea of him, than his bent brow at first lets one into the vast humanity of his temper, or than an undistinguishing smile would supply the place of his manly curiosity and penetration. To paint him with a cheerful, open countenance would be a poor return of a compliment for the flattery that his approbation bestows, which, by not being promised, doubly satisfies one's self-love. The merit of others is degrading to their friends. Mr — makes his open upon you, by persuading you that he discovers some in you. Mr — has that true characteristic of a great man, that he is superior to others in his private, social, unbending hours. I am far from meaning by this superiority that he exerts the force of his genius unnecessarily: on the contrary, you only perceive his superiority in those moments by his being more agreeable, good-natured and idle, with more ease than other people. He seems inquisitive, as if his only business were to learn; and is unreserved, as if he were only to inform; and is equally incapable of mystery in pretending to know what he does not, or in concealing what he does. In the House of Commons he was for

some time an ungraceful and unpopular speaker, the abundance of his matter overflowing his elocution, but the force of his reasoning has prevailed both over his own defects and those of his audience. He speaks with a strength and perspicuity of argument that commands the admiration of an age apt to be more cheaply pleased. But his vanity cannot satisfy itself on the terms it could satisfy others, nor would he thank any man for his approbation unless he were conscious of deserving it. But he carries this delicacy still farther, and has been at the idle labour of making himself fame and honours by pursuing a regular and steady plan, when art and eloquence would have carried him to an equal height, and made those fear him who now only love him—if a party can love a man who they see is only connected to them by principles.

“In another light one may discover another littleness in his conduct. In the affairs of his office he is as minute and as full of application as if he were always to remain in the same post, and as exact and knowing as if he always had been in it. He is as attentive to the solicitation and interests of others in his province as if he were making their fortune, not his own; and to the great detriment of the Ministry, has turned one of the best sinecures under the Government into one of the most laborious employments, at the same time imagining that the ease with which he executes it will prevent the discovery of his innovation. He receives all officers who address to him with as little pride as if he were not born their equal or superior; yet this defect of birth is a blemish which some of the greatest men have wanted to make them completely great. Tully had it, had the happiness and glory of raising himself from a private condition, but, boasting of it, might as well have been noble. A patrician's daughter would have degraded herself by marrying a man who usurped that privilege of nobility, pride of what one can neither cause nor prevent. I say nothing of his integrity, because I know nothing of it but that it has never been breathed upon even by suspicion; it will be time enough to vindicate it when it has been impeached. He is as well bred as those who colour timidity with gentleness of manners, and as bravely sincere as those who take, or would have brutality taken



for honesty ; but though his greatest freedom is polite, his greatest condescension is dignified with spirit, and he can no more court his enemies than relax in civility to his friends. But though he has more spirit than almost any man living, it is never looked upon as flowing from his passions by the intimate connection that it always preserves with his understanding. Yet his passions are very strong ; he loves play, women more, and one woman more than all. The amiableness of his behaviour to her, is only equalled by hers to him ; but as your Ladyship would not know a picture of this charming woman, when drawn with all her proper, gracefull virtues, and as that engaging ignorance might draw you even into an uncertainty about the portrait of the gentleman, I shall lay down my pencil, and am,

“ Madam,

“ Your ladyship’s

“ Most obedient, humble servant,

“ VANDYKE.”

Two speeches of the Secretary-at-War are reported during the spring of 1748. To meet the large extra expenditure necessitated by the war, Pelham had decided to raise £6,300,000 by transferable 4 per cent. annuities. The loan was oversubscribed, although no specific security had been named. He moved, on February 8, for the establishment of a fund to be devoted to this purpose, raised by a tax of one shilling in the pound on goods and merchandise imported into Great Britain, with certain drawbacks and rebates. Velters Cornwall, who sat in the House of Commons for Hereford from 1722 till 1768, objected to the proposal, from general dislike to the war and to the foreign policy of the country for the preceding fifty years. Fox followed, and devoted his remarks to exposing the fallacy of Cornwall’s arguments. He contended that money must be found to continue the war until an honourable peace should be obtained. He thought that Pelham’s suggestion was the best method which could, under the circumstances, be devised. The bill subsequently became law without serious opposition.

His second speech was delivered in a debate initiated by Richard Grenville, afterwards Lord Temple, on a bill to restore the summer assizes at Buckingham to that town, whence they had been recently removed to Aylesbury. Fox's intervention in this local squabble was accepted with gratitude by the Grenville family, upon whose unpopularity the incident throws a lurid light. "I wish I had heard your speech in the House of Commons. 'Tis much commended, and Mr Grenville told me that it was not only an exceedingly good speech, but a remarkably kind one to him, and that he should always remember it." <sup>1</sup>

Cumberland embarked for the Continent in February, to take over again the supreme command in the Low Countries. Just as in previous years, his forces were outnumbered by the French, for the muster of the allies proved to be far below estimate. Under such conditions he could not but recognise the necessity of ending the struggle. The Preliminaries of Peace were signed at Aix-la-Chapelle on April 30, but owing to unexpected difficulties, the Definitive Treaty was not concluded until October. England gained little by the war, and her national debt had largely increased. The question of Spain's right of search, which had been the origin of the conflict, was not even mentioned in the clauses of the Convention, nor in the subsequent treaty with Spain in 1750.

Fox had taken the opportunity, during the preceding August, to urge the expediency of a settlement, in a letter to Newcastle, who was abroad in attendance upon the King: "Peace, your Grace knows, is become more than ever necessary, for should the hopes so strongly conceived of it now vanish, it would affect credit more, and in that respect have worse consequences than the most fearful of us apprehended from the continuance of the war." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ilchester to H. Fox, March 1748.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, August 5, 1748. "Private." (S.P. Dom. Military 19, Record Office.)

And soon after the articles were signed, Fox wrote a few lines of congratulation. He testified to his own feelings and to those of Pelham: "Your brother's countenance, deportment, temper, as well as his conversation, shew his satisfaction and the part he took in your Grace's honour and success. For my own part, as I must own, I trembl'd and despair'd, so I should be asham'd not to own that I now rejoice and am most thankful."<sup>1</sup> Newcastle was delighted with this adroit flattery, and showed the letter to the King. "As soon as the German ministers went in that morning, His M. told them all that he had just seen letters from England which showed how pleased everybody was with what had been done. That particularly he had seen a letter from the Secretary-at-War, who was not always so sanguine, strongly in that way."<sup>2</sup>

Newcastle's official relations with Fox were perfectly cordial, although their views upon the question of peace and war were dissimilar, and although the Secretary-at-War was Pelham's special friend. On one occasion Newcastle hurled the reproach of being "economists" at Pelham and Fox. On another, we find Fox complaining to Newcastle's secretary, Stone, of being hurried into signing a document which was likely to entail fresh payments from the Treasury: "Give me leave to observe to you that this is a new expense with which Mr Pelham is not acquainted, and I have ever thought it my duty previously to acquaint him with ev'ry such expense, however small, arising from the office."<sup>3</sup>

Newcastle, to the best of his power, furthered any business which, in Cumberland's absence, Fox had occasion to forward for the King's sanction. He ostensibly lent a willing ear to Fox's representations on behalf of Hanbury-Williams, who had been accredited as British

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, October 25, 1748 (Add. MSS. 32,717).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to H. Fox, November 15, 1748.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to A. Stone, September 30, 1747 (S.P. Dom. Military 18, Record Office).

representative at the court of the Elector of Saxony. The climate of Dresden was too rigorous to suit Sir Charles's health, and he looked forward with horror to the prospect of an annual visit to Warsaw in the train of the Elector, who combined with that exalted position the monarchy of Poland. He asked Fox to press for his removal to some post more suited to his delicate constitution. Newcastle, for a moment, seemed prepared to grant his particular desire for going to Turin, but, in the end, only relieved him of his duties at Dresden. A new appointment, however, was found for him as Envoy-Extraordinary to Berlin, and in the meantime he was given a "profitable commission"—the duty of handing the Garter to the Margrave of Anspach.



## CHAPTER VIII

THE session of 1749-50 was occupied by attacks upon the foreign policy of the ministers, by Pelham's financial schemes, and by the Mutiny Bill, in which new and controversial clauses were inserted.

A fresh critic of the recent peace, and of Government measures in general, had arisen in the person of Lord Egmont, previously known as Lord Perceval, who had recently succeeded to this Irish earldom on the death of his father. Although his seat in the House of Commons was due to Pelham's patronage,<sup>1</sup> he had attached himself to the Prince of Wales's party. The new Opposition had now taken concrete form, and, secretly guided by the hand of Bolingbroke, professed to shape its policy on the maxims inculcated in his book, *The Patriot King*, which advocated the destruction of the party system and the initiation of less corrupt methods of government. Its strength lay in the fusion of the Tories and Jacobites with the Prince's following, a connection which had recently become practicable owing to the complete and final collapse of the Stuart cause. The Leicester House Party, thus organised, and named after Frederick's residence in London, became an important factor in the events of later years. As yet it contained no politician of first-class abilities, for Lee, Nugent, Dashwood and Baltimore can only be described as mediocrities. Granville himself was unwilling to take a hand; but Dodington threw up his office of Treasurer of the Navy, at the Prince's request,

<sup>1</sup> Fox was instrumental in obtaining his return for Weobly, upon a petition in Parliament (Walpole's *Memoirs of George II*, i. 31).

to join his household. He was looking to emoluments in a future reign, which he was not destined to enjoy.

We have already seen that Fox would have preferred this Treasurership to his own post. He again took steps to urge his claims; but both the King and Duke so earnestly pressed him to remain Secretary-at-War that he could not refuse.<sup>1</sup> Lyttelton was offered the post and accepted it, but failed to obtain re-election. The vacancy finally fell to a son of William, first Earl of Dartmouth, Henry Legge, who had been employed on the Continent during the peace negotiations.

With Pelham's scheme for the reduction of the rate of interest on the national debt we are not concerned. He was largely assisted by Sir John Barnard, the originator of a similar project in 1737; and carried it against the approval of the Bank of England and that of the East India Company. The debates on the Mutiny Bill, however, come within the scope of our enquiry. The measure was piloted through the House of Commons by the Secretary-at-War; though the Duke of Cumberland was individually responsible for those changes which raised a storm in the country.

The chief point to which objection was taken was the endeavour to subject officers on half-pay to military law. It was feared that such a regulation would increase the power of the Crown, by causing those who were affected by it to use their influence in favour of ministers. The proposal had first been inserted in an Admiralty Bill brought forward by Lord Barrington on February 1. Notwithstanding a petition, and various other signs of both naval discontent and popular feeling against the measure, the clause passed through the Committee stage, but was found to have disappeared when the bill came again before the House upon the Report. A similar proposition, introduced in the Mutiny Bill a week later, became law; for it was held more than doubtful whether

<sup>1</sup> H. Walpole to H. Mann, March 23, 1749 (*Letters*, ii. 366).

half-pay army officers were not already amenable to martial law.

Further clauses dealing with regulations for courts-martial were debated with some bitterness on two separate occasions. In Committee, Fox moved an addition to the clause which enacted that no one should be tried twice for the same offence, to forbid "sentences being revised more than once." Cumberland sanctioned this alteration, of which he did not altogether approve, in order to preserve unity among his friends, who were somewhat inclined to become rebellious.<sup>1</sup> This did not satisfy Egmont. He moved to omit the last three words, but was defeated on a division. He and his followers walked out of the House on the Report, after an undignified display of temper, when Fox vigorously opposed an amendment which tended to weaken the oath of secrecy relating to the vote of individual members of courts-martial. A further innovation, in a bill introduced a few weeks later by Colonel George Townshend, forbidding the punishment of non-commissioned officers except by courts-martial, was objected to by the Secretary-at-War, and was rejected.

The reduction of the army to about 19,000 men, though contrary to his wishes, gave Cumberland the necessary leisure to set about his work of reform in real earnest. Twenty thousand soldiers had been disbanded since the termination of the war, and discharges from the navy doubled that figure. Yet the Opposition was still dissatisfied, and, with their customary complaints of the dangers of standing armies, proposed that the land forces should be further reduced by 4,000 men. This was opposed by Fox and others, and was negatived by a large majority.

The Secretary-at-War's letter-books for 1748 and subsequent years are material evidence of a strenuous effort to evolve method and order from the chaos into which War Office routine had fallen. Weekly statements of recruits and of other particulars were made compulsory ;

<sup>1</sup> Cumberland to H. Fox, January 22, 1750.

for up to that date regimental returns seem to have been the exception, not the rule. Commissions and appointments received more ample consideration. Fresh regulations for the better government of the Guards, horse and foot, were drawn up ; and penalties against commissaries and shopkeepers for misappropriating or embezzling money were framed and submitted to the law officers.

It is impossible to trace any features directly attributable to Fox's initiative among these changes, of which a sample alone is given. The credit for their inception, and for the establishment of improved discipline among all ranks of the army, rests with Cumberland. His genius was essentially creative, and, favoured with the advantages of youth and station, he was able successfully to combat the antagonism of sloth and reaction. Horace Walpole classes him among the five greatest men of his acquaintance ; but posterity, unable to put out of mind the remembrance of his failures in the field, is slow to credit him with that mental superiority which he undoubtedly used to splendid advantage in other spheres.

Fox's talents were shaped in a different mould. Neither he nor his son, Charles James, have left their mark upon the Statute Book. Their opportunities for constructive action were indeed scanty, limited in each case to a few short months. Yet it is questionable whether this gift was highly developed in either statesman. As an administrator Henry Fox was greatest in subordination. He proved himself a willing and invaluable auxiliary to Cumberland. But in the handling of the party machine he excelled. He had forgotten nothing of his early teaching in the management of men. The House of Commons was the scene of his greatest triumphs. There he was at his best, and those qualities which proved a ready instrument to turn a vote or influence a waverer won him a host of friends. In later years, at times when the secret-service money was at his disposal, he stooped to other methods of securing his ends ; but, as Secretary-



at-War, his own natural resources were his chief weapon and proved an invaluable asset to his party. His word was the safest of bonds alike to friend or foe. His courage was indomitable, and amounted at times to a supreme contempt for public opinion. His tact, his broadness of mind, his good temper, all combined to verify the forecast of his revered leader and patron that he would become indispensable to the Whig Ministries of the future.

The growing friction between the two Secretaries of State, Newcastle and Bedford, broke this year into an open flame. Bedford's close connection with Sandwich, whose conduct on the Continent in 1748 had excited Newcastle's displeasure,<sup>1</sup> caused the latter to suspect a cabal. The King's civility to Bedford, combined with the partiality of Cumberland and his sister, Princess Amelia, further aroused his Grace's jealousy. He made every effort to obtain his rival's dismissal. The King wavered somewhat during his residence in Hanover, but in the end stood firm. Although Pelham was unwilling to proceed to extremities for fear of playing into the hand of the Opposition, he agreed for once with his brother that a change was desirable. Indeed, Bedford, furious at the knowledge of the intrigue to remove him, was becoming quite intractable, and proceeded during the spring to develop a policy of his own with regard to America. He refused to accept an offer of the Mastership of the Horse, vacant by the Duke of Richmond's recent death, unless Sandwich was appointed his successor.

The brothers had resolved, should a change be brought about, that the Secretaryship must be given to a member of the Upper House. But Sandwich was now as unacceptable as Bedford, and, since Pelham refused

<sup>1</sup> "Sandwich and his Grace differed in the summer of 1748. The Duke had a mind to make them friends. Sandwich gave H.R.H. *carte blanche*. H.R.H. proposed an accommodation. His Grace never honoured the Duke with any answer; left him off; grew cool, impertinent and inveterate" (H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, December 4, 1751. Add. MSS. 9,191).

for one instant to consider Lord Granville's claims, the choice was limited. But this was nothing to the difficulty which would have arisen, of deciding between the rival candidates in the Commons. Sir Thomas Robinson, afterwards Lord Grantham, a successful diplomat, though unversed in the intricacies of politics, was spoken of as a possible selection. To the claims of Pitt and Fox, which were immeasurably superior, Pelham alludes in a letter to his brother, dated August 3. "In the House of Commons there are several who put themselves, and indeed are, near upon an equality, all greatly above any one you think of. Nature will operate in such a case, and ill humours and discontents, though smothered for a time, will at last burst."<sup>1</sup> Pitt had certainly been currying favour with Newcastle, possibly with a view to obtaining the reversion of the post. Their relations on the surface, at this time, were even intimate. Fox, on the other hand, remained unshaken in his adherence to Pelham.

"In the *brouilleries* at court, which are various and never ran higher than they do at present, you'll be surprised to hear that I am perhaps the only man who is very well with all parties. And I do assure you it is owing to no art, nor do I believe or think that it will be of any use to me that I am so. I go on in a plain, direct way, and as I think they are much in the wrong to act towards one another as they do, I act in a different way with regard to all of them, keeping still and always firm to my old friends."<sup>2</sup>

He did not, however, share his chief's growing distrust of the Bedfords. Sandwich consulted him in October. He spoke of some reports which he had lately heard from what he thought was an authentic quarter, which, if true, deserved the serious attention of the several parties con-

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Pelham Administration*, ii. 370.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, November 30, 1750 (Phillips MSS.).

cerned.<sup>1</sup> Fox did not himself believe that Newcastle would go the length of gratifying his personal spite at the risk of upsetting the Government, and wrote to Hanbury-Williams that he still expected to see Bedford in office "in a year's time."

The whole situation underwent a complete change in March, when the Prince of Wales died with unexpected suddenness. The King's failing health had been watched with interest by the Opposition. A new Administration had been already planned to take effect upon his decease. In it places were allotted to all the Prince's friends. These dreams were now quickly swept away, and organised opposition was again to become a thing of the past. Pelham was relieved of further fears in that quarter; and became more ready to fall in with his brother's wish to replace Bedford by Lord Holderness, whose colourless career as a diplomat betokened complacency and a probable lack of individuality in office. Stratagem was necessary in order to effect their purpose; for the King was distinctly unwilling to sacrifice Bedford. He had no such qualms about Sandwich, and raised no objection to his dismissal from the Admiralty on June 13. This step had the desired result, for on the very same day Bedford asked leave of the King to vacate his office as a protest against the treatment to which his friend was subjected. During his interview in the closet he passed a scathing indictment of Newcastle's recent conduct and methods; indicating clearly that he looked upon his downfall as largely due to his friendship for the King's younger son.

Fox's growing intimacy with Cumberland had brought him into closer touch with Bedford and his friends. But he seems to have made it clear, on several occasions, that in the case of a rupture he would not feel able to desert Pelham. Foreseeing that Bedford's dismissal, which he looked upon as aimed as an insult to Cumberland, was sooner or later certain, he had urged him to take a humbler

<sup>1</sup> Sandwich to H. Fox, October 12, 1750.

post of his own accord. Sandwich, with whom Fox had several conversations upon the subject, was in favour of the same course, and seemed at one time to think that their arguments would carry the day.<sup>1</sup> But their plans were frustrated by Richard Rigby, erstwhile a *protégé* of the Prince of Wales. He was now supplanting Sandwich in the affections of the Duke of Bedford, "the silliest and most unaccountable, most ungovernable and most governed man I ever knew,"<sup>2</sup> and was eager to demonstrate his influence. The chance of future harmony between the rival camps in any case was small; and Bedford's resolve to remain Secretary of State until removed had made little difference to the general trend of affairs.

Fox was now face to face with a serious crisis in his career. So far his path had been comparatively smooth. It had led him in natural sequence, as a follower of Walpole, to service under Pelham. His allegiance withstood the shock of Bedford's downfall, but was to undergo a severer test in the attacks upon his new patron, Cumberland. "The Duke," as he is best known in contemporary history, was George's favourite son. His friendship and support opened a new vista in Fox's life, which proved a welcome relief from the tedious squabbles of Newcastle and his brother. A real regard, too, had sprung up, once mutual confidence had been engendered in their business relations at the War Office. "'Tis your own fault if you are not altogether as easy with him as with yr equals. I declare I was as much so, as when I was with you," wrote Fox to Hanbury-Williams,<sup>3</sup> after a three days' visit to the Duke in Windsor Park. And to his same friend, a year later, when Cumberland lay ill, the result of a fall from his horse, Fox spoke of "the pain you know I must be in, for you know my affection,

<sup>1</sup> Sandwich to H. Fox, March 30, 1751.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, December 4, 1751 (Add. MSS. 9,191).

<sup>3</sup> October 16, 1750 (Phillips MSS.).





WILLIAM, DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.

By D. Morier.



my admiration and my infinite obligations.”<sup>1</sup> On that occasion he was summoned to the Duke’s bedside, to the exclusion, and consequently to the disgust, of Pelham. “His illness showed his affection and regard for me to be greater than I ever before presumed to think it. He sent for me and saw me only, besides his own family, and that for an hour every day.”<sup>2</sup> By then, however, Fox had reached the parting of the ways, and was recognised as the successor to Bedford in the leadership of Cumberland’s followers in the Government.

The onslaught upon the Duke commenced with the session, in January. On the day of the meeting of Parliament, a pamphlet, entitled *Constitutional Queries*, was circulated in the post to members of both Houses, and was scattered broadcast in London. It likened the object of its attentions to Richard III, and hinted at the possibility of an attempt, by means of his military ascendancy, to oust his nephew from the succession to the throne. New fuel was unnecessary to fan the flame of the Duke’s unpopularity with the public. His ill success on the Continent had not been compensated by his victory at Culloden. Scot and Jacobite alike had combined with his detractors, among whom had been included his own brother, to blacken his character and exaggerate the severity of his repressory measures. His army reforms, too, being cast in a German mould, were looked upon with suspicion. His personality was certainly unattractive to those outside the circle of his intimates. His bearing was stiff and unbending, his manners frigid and haughty. This feeling of dislike found public expression after Frederick’s death. “Oh that it was but his brother! Oh that it was but the Butcher!” cried the crowds. Its immediate effect was observed when the question of a Regency Bill became urgent.

George II was an old man; his health was none of the

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, November 22, 1751.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, December 4, 1751 (Add. MSS. 9,191).

best. His grandson, Prince George, now heir-apparent, was twelve years of age. To provide for the eventuality of a minority was deemed expedient. The King wished for Cumberland to become sole Regent, but the Pelhams were naturally unwilling to advance their personal antagonist, and still more to bear the brunt of the popular odium which would have been involved in such a course. It was proposed that the Princess of Wales should take upon herself the Regency, assisted by a council consisting of members of the Ministry in power at the time, with the Duke of Cumberland as president. The King was powerless, and the Duke felt constrained to consent to the scheme unfolded to him by the Lord Chancellor, though bitterly disappointed at the insignificant position meted out to him.

Fox's attitude upon the bill was equivocal. He frankly disliked the measure. "What I said against it was because what was said for it was against the Duke," he told the King at a subsequent interview.<sup>1</sup> And to Pelham, who complained of the tenor of his speeches, he said, "Had I spoken like myself, I should have said ten times more against the bill." Yet he hesitated to vote against it, and confined his opposition to a destructive examination of its clauses and phraseology.

The bill had passed the Lords without serious protest ; and the first real signs of trouble arose in the Committee stage in the Commons on May 16. Speaker Onslow launched out into weighty objections to the principle, especially to the restrictions upon the Regent's power. An acrimonious debate ensued. It was left to Pitt to drive home an insidious thrust at Cumberland, who never forgave him the insult. He supported the restrictions, said he, for, should the Princess die in possession of the sole power, this might become a precedent for the appointment of any ambitious person who "should think less of protecting the Crown than of wearing it." His

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 137.



meaning was apparent, and Fox rose at once to defend his new patron. He maintained that the laws of the land were sufficient to control the powers given to the Regent, who, he thought, would be rather assisted than thwarted by the council. Pitt contended that Fox had misunderstood his speech, but their wrangle on words continued until the House grew tired of their altercations. Fox retired without recording his vote.

On the clause dealing with penalties for those who should interfere with the enactments of the bill, the fun again waxed fast and furious. Fox objected to the offender being judged worthy of the penalties of *præmunire*, which were excessive and had in practice rarely been enforced. He suggested that the common law was equal to dealing with the crime, or, if not, that an impeachment for high treason was the proper course. He used his best endeavours to insert safeguards, but the debate "dwindled into a grammatical dispute," in which he and Pitt were again the chief figures.<sup>1</sup>

It was not the first time during the session that Fox and Pitt had crossed swords. Little cordiality had existed between the two men; and Fox seems to have resented the suspicion that Pitt had made overtures to Leicester House shortly before the Prince's death. His own adherence to Cumberland was finally to accentuate and confirm their mutual mistrust. Their views were at variance some eighteen months before, on Pelham's proposal to reduce the numbers of the navy by 2,000 men. The Cabinet were by no means unanimous in recommending the change: indeed, Newcastle was strongly opposed to it. Pitt ranged himself at his side, and by his outspoken remarks gave ground for the rumour that he would not long remain a member of the Ministry. Fox, as usual, supported Pelham, and the reduction was carried only to be rescinded in the following November, when France

<sup>1</sup> For the debates on the Regency Bill, see Walpole's *Memoirs*, vol. i.; Coxe's *Pelham Administration*, vol. ii.; Walpole's *Letters*, vol. iii.

showed clearly that she was arming for a further struggle.

A trivial quarrel between two army officers in the House of Commons gave cause for further discord. "This affair would be a trifle, if it had not opened the long-smothered rivalry between Fox and Pitt ; for these ten days they have been civilly at war together ; and Mr Pelham is bruised between them."<sup>1</sup> During a discussion upon the Mutiny Bill in February, Sir Henry Erskine, a nephew of the late Duke of Argyll, ventilated grievances against General Anstruther. The latter, when in command of the forces in Minorca ten years before, had suspected Erskine of being involved in a conspiracy against his authority. He had dragged him before a court-martial, but was unable to prove the charge. Both were now members of the House of Commons. Anstruther was absent from the debate, but, at the Secretary-at-War's suggestion, stood forward in his own defence on the following day. Erskine, having fired his shot, was advisedly prepared to let the subject drop. But a motion by George Townshend, on March 4, for the production of all papers relating to the court-martial, again brought the matter to a head. Fox, in subsequent debates, championed Anstruther ; Pitt took Erskine's side. Anstruther had been an unpopular officer, and his conduct in Minorca had necessitated investigation by the Privy Council. Yet the spite against him could be partly traced to his vote in the Commons on the Porteous riots. He was the only Scotch member who then voted for the demolition of the Netherbow gate at Edinburgh, and his countrymen had never forgotten or forgiven the slight. Fox was one who had acted on that occasion in like manner. He now opposed a parliamentary enquiry, and the reception by the House of a petition from a Minorchese against Anstruther, both advocated in extravagant language by Pitt. He stated, with the assent of nearly every lawyer present,

<sup>1</sup> H. Walpole to H. Mann, March 13, 1751 (*Letters*, iii. 37).

that the case was covered by an Act of Grace, and therefore could not be reopened.

Erskine was finally given two days in which to collect and bring forward his charges. When, upon examination, these proved to be insufficient and ridiculous, the attack was shifted to fresh ground. Anstruther's enemies proposed to make him liable for damages to those whom he had oppressed. It was held, however, that he was immune, for any action which he had taken was anterior to the afore-mentioned Act of Grace. This petty affair terminated at the instance of the Speaker; at whose suggestion both of the principals gave their word of honour not to allow the quarrel to proceed further.

Pitt and Fox again disagreed on the bill for the general naturalisation of foreign Protestants, introduced by Mr Nugent. Pelham had opposed the same measure in 1747, and had then induced Fox to speak against it. He now gave it his support, to spite Bedford, who was preparing to make the bill his own.<sup>1</sup> Fox refused to change his vote on the second reading, although he hinted that he was open to conviction, and allowed himself to be talked round in Committee. He said that Pelham's suggestion of settling foreign Protestants in Scotland on the estates forfeited in the Rebellion was sufficient reason for him to alter his mind. Pitt fell upon him for his inconsistency in a good speech, during which Fox remarked to his neighbour, "He is a better speaker than I am: but, thank God, I have more judgment."<sup>2</sup> The bill was most unpopular in the manufacturing towns, where it was feared that an influx of foreigners would prejudice home industries. Pelham bowed his head before the storm of petitions presented against it. The third reading was postponed, and nothing more was heard of the proposal.

An election at Westminster and its consequences occupied much of the time and attention of the House of

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 53.

Commons in 1750 and 1751. Lord Trentham, eldest son of Lord Gower, sought re-election in November 1749, on his appointment to a post in the Admiralty. He was successful, after a strenuous contest ; but a scrutiny was demanded, which remained undecided until the following May. The high bailiff, when summoned to the bar of the Commons in February, to account for this delay, put forward the difficulties of the case as an excuse. He was ordered to expedite matters, but, when recalled at the end of January 1751, complained to the House of obstruction and intimidation. Fox, in the ensuing debate, found opportunity for ridiculing Egmont, who claimed to be under special obligations to Westminster, though the voters had refused to return him as their member at the last general election. To Fox was also largely due a resolution that the high bailiff should be questioned as to the identity of his persecutors.<sup>1</sup> Three persons were named as the chief offenders: Crowle, counsel to the defeated candidate, Sir George Vandeput; the Hon. Alexander Murray, brother of Lord Elbank a suspected Jacobite; and Gibson, an upholsterer. Crowle, who had interests at Windsor, was first heard. He was spared imprisonment by Fox's intervention, and was dismissed, after receiving the reprimand of the House upon his knees. Gibson was ordered to Newgate, but his case was afterwards dealt with in like manner.

The whole interest in the incident centres in the proceedings taken against Murray. He was summoned to the bar to defend himself on February 6. The evidence in his favour, given by Sir John Tyrrel, Lord Carpenter, and others, was vapid and unconvincing. A motion, to declare that the case was fully proved, was supported by Lord Dupplin, and opposed by Sir Francis Dashwood and Sir John Hinde Cotton. Fox answered the latter, "in one of the finest, most spirited and artful speeches that he ever made; set Lord Dupplin's evidence against

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, xiv. 880.



Cotton's; summed up the whole charge and proofs, and instead of ridiculing Sir John Tyrrel's ridiculous evidence, as less able speakers would have done, he enforced it, commented on it, and then produced it against Lord Carpenter's." <sup>1</sup> The House committed Murray to close confinement in Newgate jail; and, at the instance of some of the younger Whigs, he was also ordered to receive his sentence upon his knees. He refused to submit to this arbitrary proceeding, and thereby placed the House in a serious dilemma; for power was lacking to enforce the demand. Fox suggested confinement in "Little Ease," a dungeon in the Tower of London, in which the occupant could neither stand up nor lie down, as a further punishment for his contumacy. A Committee was finally appointed to enquire into precedents for the course to be pursued: and it was decided for the present to adhere to the original sentence of confinement, coupled with more rigorous restrictions. These were shortly afterwards relaxed on account of Murray's indisposition, and were varied with the state of his health, until the close of the session set him at liberty.

The matter was again brought forward when Parliament reassembled in November. The circumstances of Murray's liberation, and the publication of a libellous pamphlet upon his case, were deemed insulting to the Commons. They ordered his recommittal to Newgate. Pelham, who, disliking extreme measures, had persuaded the House to take no further action on the report of the Committee, in view of this fresh outbreak now spoke as strongly in favour of rigorous methods. Murray fled to the Continent, and, after an action against the publisher of the obnoxious pamphlet had failed, the whole affair was allowed to drop.

It is difficult to justify Fox's conduct in these proceedings. Political bias seems an insufficient ground for the personal venom with which he pursued Murray. The

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 23.

prospect of tripping up Egmont, Cumberland's chief adversary in the Regency debates, and the baiting of a Jacobite, were fascinating allurements. But, when carried to excess, such triumphs often lead to unexpected results. Murray's conduct during the scrutiny was indefensible and worthy of grave censure; but the tyrannical persecution to which he was subjected by the more violent Whigs, among whom we fear that Fox must certainly be included, raised him to the position of a martyr in the eyes of the populace. His enemies' lack of moderation transformed him, quite undeservedly, into an object of compassion.

George's dislike and mistrust of his nephew, Frederick, King of Prussia, and the incessant intrigues of the French court, created continual alarm in his mind for the future of the Electorate. In the event of the Emperor's death, it was feared that war might again become general on the Continent. To minimise this risk, the King evolved a scheme with Newcastle for the immediate election of the Archduke Joseph, eldest son of the Emperor and Maria Theresa, as King of the Romans and successor to the Imperial throne. The matter was complicated by the age of the Archduke, who was only ten years old. The selection of a minor had no precedent in recent years. The King hoped to overcome the opposition of Prussia by winning the consent of the remaining electors to his proposals. Doles to ministers and subsidies to States were the only means by which this could be effected. Consequently Newcastle requested his brother, during the summer of 1750, to estimate in the ensuing budget for subsidies to Bavaria, the Palatinate and Saxony. Pelham was horrified. The proposal was out of all keeping with his desire for economy. To Bavaria only could he be prevailed on to provide a yearly grant. This bill came before Parliament in February 1751. It passed by a vast majority, in consequence of Pelham's intimation that he saw no reason to apprehend that any increased expense

would be necessary, and that the election would certainly be secured. His prognostications were destined to be woefully disappointed.

During the summer months various complications arose which seriously compromised the success of the undertaking. The demands of the Elector Palatine and of Saxony stiffened under the secret influence of Prussia and France. The court of Vienna, when asked to make some sacrifice for the cause, openly expressed doubts as to the desirability of the election. Yet, notwithstanding this rebuff from the party most concerned, the King and Newcastle refused to be turned from their purpose. They proposed a subsidiary treaty with Saxony, in order to preserve her from the temptation of an alliance with France, on lines closely resembling those of the recent arrangement with Bavaria. Pelham at first refused to find the money; and even spoke of opposing the subsidy in Parliament. But he exemplified his usual weakness of purpose by consenting to the proposal, and by himself introducing it in the Commons on January 22, 1752. The chief opposition to the grant was raised by the Duke of Bedford in the House of Lords. He arraigned the whole system of subsidiary treaties in time of peace, and vehemently objected to various clauses in this agreement. Sandwich, out of deference to Cumberland, spoke in favour of the bill, but adversely to ministers.

An address aimed against similar conventions in the future raised a further debate in the Lower House, in which Pelham took occasion to abuse Bedford and Sandwich. He asked Fox afterwards if he had been too severe. "No," answered Fox, "as they began; though you originally gave the provocation." "Oh! Fox," replied he, "you did not feel for me as I should for you in the same circumstances."<sup>1</sup> Six months later Pelham was told by Dodington, in reply to a lament that his speech on the Bavarian treaty was being misrepresented, that some one

had been heard to say that his vote had been due to the assurances which he believed Pelham had given. On being questioned, Dodington said that he thought that that some one was Fox, an answer which left Pelham seriously discomposed.<sup>1</sup>

Fox certainly spoke in favour of the Bavarian subsidy, although he owed to Hanbury-Williams, who as Minister at Dresden had the negotiations in hand, that he did not consider it necessary. He confessed, however, that he was not fully acquainted with the subject.<sup>2</sup> He had never shown any strong inclination to the study of foreign affairs, and had been content to leave his conscience on these points in the hands of others, chief among whom was Hanbury-Williams himself. We get a glimpse of his view of continental politics at this time in his speech upon the reduction of seamen.<sup>3</sup> His inclination, there expressed, was distinctly favourable to a system of subsidiary treaties upon modest lines.

"We have had lately repeated experience of a war carried on by this nation in conjunction with a confederacy against France; and from that experience we have reason to judge favourably, and to hope for the best, from the event of any such future war. Surely, then, the wisest measure we can pursue is to cultivate an alliance and friendship with those States that have reason to be jealous of the power of France as well as this nation. Is there any State in Europe more proper for this purpose than the German Empire? Whilst that powerful body is united and in alliance with us, we may rest secure that

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 159. Pelham told Dodington that he would have preferred to give subsidies for value received, and not to be obliged to buy the Electors one by one. His speech, as reported in the *London Magazine*, certainly gives the impression that the demand was final, and that the success of the scheme was assured. It is impossible to give much credit to the incident, as the authorities involved are often unreliable. Mr Riker suggests that it was Dodington's own vote which was influenced; but it seems difficult to place this interpretation upon the passage, though it is undeniably obscure.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, September 19, 1751.

<sup>3</sup> January 25, 1751. (*Parliamentary History*, xiv. 858.)



France will never give us any cause of quarrel. Consequently, is it not our interest to cultivate a friendship with the German Empire, and to contribute all we can towards the preservation of an union amongst the several members thereof? Can the saving of £50,000, or even £100,000 a year, be put in the balance with this? Do not we know that France is every day, by negotiations, by presents, by the tender of pensions, endeavouring to sow division among the members of that powerful body? And shall we be at no pains or expense to preserve their concord?"

Before proceeding further, it may now be of interest, in view of the developments of the next few years, to consider Henry Fox's position in the eyes of the world and his relations with his individual colleagues in office. Honours were thrust upon him in various parts of the country. He was sworn High Steward of Malmesbury in September 1751, and was appointed Portreeve of the town of Chichester a year later.<sup>1</sup> Until the date of Pelham's death in 1754, no whisper of unpopularity is traceable in the annals of the period. We can find no hint or suspicion of that cloud of disrepute which was so soon to blight his fair fame and thwart his ambitions. He had risen by his own talents to become a power in the state; and his efforts were universally recognised as deserving of success. We have seen that he prided himself, in 1750, on being on good terms with all parties. The testimony of Lord Hillsborough (that of a friend, it is true) bears out his popularity two years later:

"Mr Fox has something very frank and open about him and he resolved to push for his turn—not by opposition, for he had a family, and could not afford to part with his emoluments; but, if accidents should happen, he pretended to succeed. Indeed, Mr Pelham's life was as good as his, and he would not oppose him; but he should endeavour to be next, and would consider himself

<sup>1</sup> Melbury Game Books.

as such. I [Dodington] asked him whether he held out his hand, etc. His lordship said, Yes, to all the world: that it was prodigious how many friends he had made.”<sup>1</sup>

With Pelham, Fox's relations were always cordial, although the two men drifted apart after Bedford's resignation and their differences on the Regency Bill. Ilchester congratulated his brother on the “very prudent resolution” he had taken with regard to Mr Pelham. “Perhaps you may keep it without much difficulty, for, as this affair<sup>2</sup> is entirely over, new matters may arise in which your opinions may agree, or at least not disagree.”<sup>3</sup> Both men recognised that they were necessary one to the other in their different ways, and accepted the situation. It was only upon occasions that their views were seriously divergent. Pelham on many occasions showed the value which he placed upon Fox's judgment; and, in return, was always ready to hold out the helping hand. On April 5, 1751, he reported by letter a conversation with the King:

“We both spoke freely, neither of us to your disadvantage, and I will make only this observation to you, that I could see you have not flattered yourself in anything you have said to me; for I found a disposition to the full as favourable to you as you could wish. Some later events have done you no hurt. Whether I stand in the same situation with regard to them, perhaps you know better than I, but this I know, that I am glad to be certain of the ground I stand upon.”

Fox's attitude on the Regency Bill increased his favour with the King. George was much mortified at the unpopularity of his favourite son. “My affection is with my son,” he said. “I assure you, Mr Fox, I like you the

<sup>1</sup> Conversation between Hillsborough and B. Dodington, November 27, 1752 (Dodington's *Diary*, p. 183)

<sup>2</sup> Bedford's resignation.

<sup>3</sup> Ilchester to H. Fox, June 22, 1751

better for wishing well to him." <sup>1</sup> It is indeed a matter for surprise that his influence did not increase, in proportion as his bond of friendship with the Duke grew stronger. But Newcastle's intimate connection with the King at this time may afford the explanation. We have seen that he and Fox were never on any terms of real cordiality from the commencement of their acquaintance. Hillsborough believed that "Newcastle did not like Fox personally, nor did the Chancellor." <sup>2</sup> This was true. Newcastle preferred subserviency and obedience in his followers: a man who could fearlessly speak out his mind filled him with distrust. Fox, on his side, despised Newcastle's pettiness, and was of too independent a nature to pander to his foibles. Small wonder, therefore, if Newcastle belittled Fox in his conversations with his Majesty. It was in his nature to do so: and his words may well have sown seeds which were to bear fruit in future years.

Through Cumberland, Fox had become friendly with Bedford and Sandwich, although their views were not always coincident. Lord Anson had deserted them, to take the Admiralty in place of the last-named, and to become Lord Hardwicke's son-in-law. At the same time Lord Granville returned to office as President of the Council. He had formerly refused to act with the Pelhams; and consequently no advances had been forthcoming from the First Lord of the Treasury. Yet these difficulties were now accommodated. To make his position more secure, Granville sought to ingratiate himself with Fox, "desired to have some conversation with him at Holland House, and told him he would reconcile himself to the Duke. Fox replied, 'They have paved your way.' Lord Granville the next day repeated this conversation to Mr Pelham, with the difference of inverting the person of the

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 183, 1751. Hardwicke's opinions on questions of the day were Newcastle's. They were inseparable in politics

speakers, and ascribing to Fox all the overtures that had come from himself." <sup>1</sup> To the knowledge of this treachery can be ascribed Fox's remark to Rigby, two years later, that he would not take Granville's word for a farthing or trust him for half an hour.<sup>2</sup>

In his home circle Fox was as happy as he was successful in public life. The atmosphere of his married life was serene and blissful, though at times dark clouds would drift across the sky. Lady Caroline's health was a source of trouble, and necessitated a succession of visits to Bath waters. Her husband was often unable to accompany her, but snatched what leisure he could from the cares of office to spend at her side. Their eldest boy, too, had been weakly from birth, and his malady, a nervous complaint, at one moment assumed serious proportions. "I dined at Holland House, where, though I drank claret with the master of it from dinner till two o'clock in the morning, I could not wash away the sorrow he is in at the shocking condition his eldest son is in, a distemper they call *Sanvitoss* dance (I believe I spell it damnably), but it is a convulsion that I think must kill him."<sup>3</sup> Courses of sea-bathing were recommended by the doctors to alleviate the disease, and fortunately proved a complete success.

A third son had been born in Conduit Street on January 13, 1749,<sup>4</sup> christened Charles James. He, too, was delicate and became at times a serious anxiety to his parents.<sup>5</sup> His father doted on him from babyhood. He was a most precocious child, and from the cradle showed that originality and force of character which were to render him

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 171.

<sup>2</sup> R. Rigby to Bedford, June 2, 1753 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 126).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, August 20, 1751 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 102).

<sup>4</sup> January 24 (N.S.).

<sup>5</sup> "He is weakly, but likely to live. His skin hangs all shrivell'd about him, his eyes stare, he has a black head of hair, and 'tis incredible how like a monkey he look'd before he was dressed" (H. Fox to Ilchester, January 14, 1749).



world-renowned. There are continual glimpses of him in the family correspondence. The earliest is one from Melbury, where the boy had been sent, during a visit of his father and mother to Ireland: "Pretty Charles is quite well. His greatest diversion is getting on the steps at the hall door, playing with dirt that is scraped off people's shoes. My Lord sits by him sometimes."<sup>1</sup> His father was very proud of his good looks, and continually referred to them. "Charles is playing by me and surprises me with the *éclat* of his beauty ev'ry time he looks me in the face."<sup>2</sup> He had charge of the boy, who was ailing, during the spring of 1752, in London. His eldest, Stephen, was at Bath with Lady Caroline, suffering from measles.

"Charles is pure well. He said, 'I am a little bit well to-day, Papa.' I asked him if I might not write you word that he was quite well. He said, 'No, *almost* quite well, but not quite.' I wanted to know what was the reason that he was not quite well, and he answered, 'I tant get up upon a chair nor out of it neither well.' So that he feels a little weak, that is all. . . . The bed-curtains of the bed that stands in the warmest part of the room are ragged, and, do you know, by no persuasion or promise could I get Charles to lie in that bed: and he wanted Mrs Digby to send for a bed from Holland House for Lucy, for he did not like anybody should lie in such a bed. There's a nice boy for you."<sup>3</sup>

During the first years of their occupation of Holland House, the leisure of the Foxs was fully employed in alterations to the grounds and gardens. William Kent had been called in, just before his death, to advise upon new terraces; Peter Collinson and Charles Hamilton, both eminent arboriculturists, to recommend shrubs suitable for the soil, and to plan new plantations and vistas. Fox speaks, in 1751, of having "just now got some ground of Mr Phillimore, my next neighbour towards Kensington;

<sup>1</sup> Lady Ilchester to H. Fox, May 26, 1750.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, November 30, 1750.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Lady C. Fox, March 5, 1752.

have put my pale on the other side of the hedge, and have made a walk for the Kensington people, which reconciles them to me.”<sup>1</sup> And writing to Lady Hervey in Paris on December 4, 1753, he said:

“ I won’t take it ill that you should imagine Mr Bateman knows more of trees and planting than I do, because when your Ladyship was an English woman I did not know an oak from a gooseberry bush. But now I won’t say how knowing I am, but only that I have this autumn planted 66 different sorts that I had not before of plants that will abide our climate. Notwithstanding which, where a Princess, and, which is a great deal more to me, Lady Hervey is concern’d, I won’t trust my own judgment, but have enquir’d of the most knowing.”

Mrs Digby expressed anxiety at the cost of all these changes. She had already seen her elder brother’s income crippled by an excessive expenditure upon his home in the country. But the fortunes of Henry and his wife seem to have been in a flourishing condition. He was even contemplating purchases of land, the gilt-edged security of the eighteenth century. He had won £10,000 in a lottery in 1748—a success which was celebrated at Redlynch by the ringing of the church bells of the neighbouring town. Lady Caroline inherited £5,000 at her father’s demise, and a like sum at her mother’s. A further legacy reached her quite unexpectedly during the same year. Lord Shelburne, “ a distant relation, who never saw her but once, and that three weeks before his death,”<sup>2</sup> left her £5,000.

Death had recently been busy among Lady Caroline’s nearest and dearest. Her father and mother had both

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, November 19, 1751.

<sup>2</sup> H. Walpole to H. Mann, April 22, 1751 (*Letters*, iii. 48). Henry Cadogan, the Duchess of Richmond’s grandfather, married, in 1671, Miss Bridget Waller, daughter of Sir Hardress Waller, of Castletown, co. Limerick. Another sister, Elizabeth, married Sir William Petty. The third son of this latter marriage, Henry, created Earl of Shelburne, was the cousin in question.

passed away. The Foxs had spent Christmas, 1749, at Goodwood, the last of a long series of family gatherings. Fox had been unwell; and the Duke wrote, cordially inviting him, with Lady Caroline and the children, to try the complete change of scene which Sussex would provide.<sup>1</sup> During the following summer, Henry obtained two months' leave from the King, in order to stay with the Kildares in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> Thence they returned about the middle of July, only a few weeks before Richmond's sudden death, at the age of 49. The Duchess's grief was terrible. She never really recovered from the blow, and died just a year later.<sup>3</sup>

During those days of sadness which succeeded the Duke's death Fox found occupation in alleviating the grief which surrounded him. "I can but do justice to Mr Fox, whose humanity, whose strength of mind, have been and are of the greatest service," wrote Pelham to Newcastle.<sup>4</sup> He insisted on the family removing to Holland House, and took in hand the necessary business arrangements.

The Duchess had been left sole guardian of her children; and after her death, by the Duke's will, they were placed in the care of the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Albemarle, Lord Kildare, Lord Cadogan and Fox. The unmarried daughters were to live with the Kildares until they reached the age of fifteen, and with the Foxs till eighteen.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord March's *A Duke and his Friends*, ii, 697.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, August 3, 1750 (S.P. Dom. Military 20, Record Office).

<sup>3</sup> Her final illness was thought "to be greatly occasion'd by her fright for Lady Sarah [her daughter], who had cut an artery and would certainly have bled to death, had not the Duchess very luckily remembered a story in ye newspaper by wch she found a very effectual way of stopping ye great effusion of blood, and by yt means sav'd her life." Lady Sarah's accident "came from thrusting her hand through a glass birdcage." Miss C. Digby to Ilchester, August 10, 1751.

<sup>4</sup> August 12, 1750 (Add. MSS. 32,722).

<sup>5</sup> The girls were to continue with Lady Kildare after they were fifteen (or in the case of Lady Sarah fourteen), if she was then residing in England.

It was decided that the young Duke should travel abroad, and his movements occasioned lengthy correspondence between Newcastle and Fox.<sup>1</sup> The latter could boast of some influence with his brother-in-law ; though the latter's escapades for the next few years were a source of serious anxiety to his relations. The future of the younger brother, George, a boy at Westminster School, had also to be secured. A barely adequate provision had been made for him in the Duke's will. The Duchess hoped that Newcastle would find him some employment or pension, and wrote to Lady Yarmouth, the King's mistress, to enlist her sympathies. The reversion of a sinecure held by Dodington was suggested to the King, but this he refused to grant. The joint entreaties, however, of Newcastle and Fox obtained the reversion of a £500 pension in Ireland, and subsequently an ensigncy in the Coldstream Guards.<sup>2</sup>

Fox was never behindhand in pushing the interests of his connections. His zeal on their behalf was one of the charges laid against him in later years. Old Lord Digby's death in November 1752 seemed a suitable occasion for an attempt to advance his grandsons, the new peer and his brother. Edward, the new Lord Digby, had been appointed a groom to Prince George in 1751, but automatically relinquished his post on succeeding his grandfather in the peerage. Fox now strove to get him made a Lord of the Bedchamber, but in vain ; and recommended the younger, Henry, for his brother's vacancy in the young Prince's household. Newcastle, though an old friend of their father's, who had died in 1746, seemed unwilling to interfere ; in fact, Ilchester thought that he must have some prejudice against the young men, so adverse was he to giving them any assistance.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Add. MSS. 32,722.

<sup>2</sup> Add. MSS. 32,722, 32,725, 32,726.

<sup>3</sup> Ilchester to H. Fox, December 5, 1752.



## CHAPTER IX

PARLIAMENT reassembled on November 14, 1751. "There never was such a session," wrote Fox, "as this is likely to be. The halcyon days the poets write of cannot exceed its calmness. A bird might build her nest in the Speaker's chair, or in his peruke. There won't be a debate that can disturb her."<sup>1</sup> Fox introduced the Army Estimates on November 27, and asked for the same number of men as in the previous year, since there was no alteration of circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Sir John Cotton moved to reduce them to 15,000. It was one of his last appearances in the House of Commons. Death removed him in February, and with him the last Jacobite of note in the country. The Estimates passed without amendment, by a large majority. With the exception of the ruffled waters stirred by the question of subsidiary treaties, Fox's forecast of the session proved materially correct. It came to an early close on March 26. The King left for Hanover five days later, and remained abroad until November.

During the autumn of 1751 Lord Chesterfield's alteration of the Calendar, which had been passed during the spring, came into operation. In order to abandon the Gregorian, or Old Style, a system already out of date in many countries on the Continent, it was found necessary to omit eleven days from the month of September. The advantages of a fresh start, and the convenience of commencing the year with January 1, instead of with March 25 as heretofore, were not fully understood for a long time.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, November 19, 1751.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 184.

Suspensions were aroused which led to disturbances, and the phrase, "Give us back our eleven days," became a popular cry in various parts of the country. Ilchester refers to local superstition in this connection in a letter to his brother: "Many people are gone to Glastonbury to see if the thorn will blossom on the new Christmas Day, and intend to judge by that whether the alteration in the Style is right or wrong."<sup>1</sup>

After the death of the Prince of Wales in the spring of 1751, the necessary arrangements for the education of his son, Prince George, were entrusted to the care of Lord Harcourt and Dr Hayter, Bishop of Norwich, as respectively governor and preceptor. The boy's actual instructors were Andrew Stone, "bosom-confidant of the Duke of Newcastle," and George Lewis Scott, a follower of Bolingbroke and friend of the late Prince.<sup>2</sup>

The Princess, mistrusting the motives of her father-in-law and the Pelhams, was jealous of the former's preference for Cumberland. She exerted herself to retain the control of the young Prince in her own hands, and succeeded in obtaining a strong ascendancy over him.

Fox's attitude seems to have brought him into serious trouble. We are told that, on the morning after the Prince's death, he privately suggested to Pelham the advisability of removing the boy to St James's Palace—in fact, to take him out of his mother's hands.<sup>3</sup> The attempt to interfere between parent and offspring was harsh and high-handed. But, had the suggestion been adopted, the history of England might have been very different. The far-reaching mistakes of the early years of George III's reign can be clearly traced to the influence of his mother and to the system of education adopted

<sup>1</sup> Redlynch, December 22, 1752. The Glastonbury thorn, reputed to have been planted by Joseph of Arimathea in A.D. 31, is said to be always in flower on Christmas Day. We are told that, in 1752, the tree did blossom on the old anniversary, January 5.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 248.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs of George III*, iv. 138

under her guidance. Yet we do not claim for Fox any prophetic insight into the future, and his suggestions were doubtless calculated to further the interests of his new patron.

The incident rests upon the unsupported testimony of Horace Walpole, who at the time he wrote was no longer on intimate terms with Fox, and was not above throwing discredit upon the motives of his former associate. Yet subsequent events lend probability to the tale. Pelham was daily drawing closer to the Princess, and was not prepared to play into Cumberland's hands by adopting those proposals, which appear somehow to have reached her ears.<sup>1</sup> So marked an affront was not easily to be forgotten. The grudge was natural, and sufficiently explains the continual unwillingness of the Leicester House party to act with the offender and the difficulties which he encountered in a future reign of obtaining well-merited rewards. Certainly the weight of the Princess's displeasure was continually thrown into the scale against him.

In the autumn of 1752, Hardwicke and the Pelhams began to take alarm at their complete lack of control over the Prince's education, a condition attributable to the system in which they had at first so warmly acquiesced.<sup>2</sup> Both Stone and Scott were content to act nominally under the directions of the Princess, who in turn had recourse to the advice of Murray, the Solicitor-General. To complete the circle, the latter was an intimate friend of Stone. The subordinates were thus able to disregard their superiors, who, upon the return of the King from

<sup>1</sup> Walpole goes on to relate that Fox informed Hanbury-Williams of his advice in a letter, which, with his other papers, fell into the hands of his elder brother at his death. The latter was on bad terms with Fox, and, to spite him, conveyed the contents to the Princess.

Shelburne, however, gives us a different version of the disposal of Hanbury-Williams's effects, and specifically mentions Fox's correspondence. He relates (*Life*, i. 132) how they were found in packing-cases many years later. They had remained in the possession of Williams's French mistress, and were returned by her to the family.

<sup>2</sup> Yorke's *Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 45.

the Continent in November, expressed their dissatisfaction at the whole position. Certain books containing doctrines of Jacobitical tendencies had been found in the possession of the young Prince, and, upon this score, doubts were thrown upon the suitability of Stone and Scott for their posts. The matter was referred by the King to his ministers, and a committee of three was appointed to consider it. The report, that nothing materially wrong could be found, led to the immediate resignation of Lord Harcourt, and, soon after, that of the Bishop.

The Pelhams were relieved at the result of the enquiry, being friendly with both Murray and Stone.<sup>1</sup> Fox was of opinion that the committee's finding was correct!

"I believe Stone as innocent as you are. I pity him, because Lord Harcourt's character, his own friendship for Murray, and some other circumstances which he is no ways to blame in, will for a while expose him to suspicions which he don't deserve. My opinion and love of justice, and nothing else, force all this from me, because I have my suspicions that all the prejudices and partialities the late Prince died with are kept up at Leicester House, *manent alta mente reposita*, I believe, and will break out when there is an opportunity."<sup>2</sup>

The vacant preceptorship was filled after some difficulty by the appointment of Dr Thomas, Bishop of Peterborough; while Lord Waldegrave, a nobleman of probity and honour, who stood high in the King's favour, was finally induced to become governor, though most reluctant to accept the responsibility.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, at the moment, the task seemed thankless enough. The air was still full of dark rumours against Stone, Scott and even Murray, whose elder brother was the Pretender's trusted adviser. Coupled with their names was that of Dr Johnson, Bishop of Gloucester, a candidate for the preceptorship; and all,

<sup>1</sup> The latter had acted as Newcastle's private secretary.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, December 8, 1752.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A.



upon the information of one Fossett, an attorney from Newcastle, and of Lord Ravensworth, were now openly accused of drinking the health of the Pretender at a dinner-party held more than twenty years before.<sup>1</sup> A new committee of five was instructed to look into these fresh charges, which, in the sequel, did not bear specific examination. The report again completely vindicated the parties concerned from the allegation of sympathy with the Stuart cause. The incident closed with a capitious motion in the House of Lords, brought forward by the Duke of Bedford.<sup>2</sup> He demanded further enquiries into the proceedings, and condemned the action of the executive in allowing the investigation to be conducted by a tribunal which he likened to a revived Star Chamber. Four peers only, however, followed his lead in the subsequent division.

On January 26, 1753, Fox moved the Army Estimates, and again asked for the same number of men as in the previous two years. The Opposition met the proposal with their annual cry for reduction. The ensuing debate was conducted on familiar lines, Lord Egmont being the chief speaker against the Government. Fox pointed out in his speech the risks which the country had run in 1745, owing to a lack of sufficient troops upon the spot. Three thousand more men in Scotland, the number in dispute at the moment, would, in his opinion, have prevented the Rebellion, and the consequent loss of life and expense to the state. He concluded with a reference to the militia, as a means of defence.

<sup>1</sup> Murray's "blind attachment" to Fox, according to Newcastle, dates from this episode. "My Lord Mansfield's attachment arises from the idlest of all things. Fox had told him that, when Lord Ravensworth's attack was begun, he (Fox) told the late King that he (Harry Fox) had drank the Pretender's health at Oxford himself. This my Lord M. thought a most brave and friendly thing; and for this he has been attached to Fox ever since." Newcastle goes on to insinuate that Fox was the real promoter of the attack! (Newcastle to A. Stone October 15, 1762. Add. MSS. 32,943.)

<sup>2</sup> March 22, 1753.

"The late rebellion must convince us of the little dependence we can have upon the militia as it is modelled at present. Whether a serviceable militia, a militia upon which we could depend for our defence even against an invading army of foreign veterans, can be formed in this rich and trading country, is a question of a very different nature. I confess I am of opinion that it is impracticable ; but, supposing it were not, I am very sure that such a militia would be much more troublesome and expensive to the people, and would be of equally dangerous consequences to our liberties ; for I hope no gentleman now thinks of adopting the principles of the Parliament of 1641, by taking the power over the militia out of the hands of the Crown. However, Sir, let this question about a serviceable militia be determined which way it will, I hope gentlemen will excuse my being for a standing army until I see a practicable scheme for forming such a militia." <sup>1</sup>

A few days later Fox seconded a bill to permit the importation of champagne and burgundy in bottles, which Pelham opposed and defeated.<sup>2</sup> He took no part in the debates on a bill for the naturalisation of Jews. This passed both Houses, but was repealed in the following session owing to the popular outcry against it. "The same clamour as is at Wells is all over the Kingdom against the Jew Bill, which actually does nothing. I thought it a silly bill, and never attended it ; but I never imagin'd as much rout could be made about it." <sup>3</sup>

The last measure of the session, the Clandestine Marriage Act, occasioned lengthy debates, and led to a quarrel between the Lord Chancellor and the Secretary-at-War. Lord Bath, observing that hard cases were continually arising from the laxity of the marriage laws then in force, had brought the fact to the notice of the House of Lords.

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, xiv. 1,288.

<sup>2</sup> *Dodington's Diary*, p. 210 ; H. Fox to Lady Hervey, September 17, 1753.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, June 23, 1753.

A committee of judges was appointed, on January 31, to consider the matter, and to put forward new legislation.

To our ideas some change seems to have been urgently needed. Scandalous abuses had appeared in the solemnisation of the marriage ceremony. A form of service before any priest was legal and binding. Licences, it is true, were prescribed, but they were solely an object of revenue, and were seldom enforced. "Fleet" marriages, performed in London by needy and debauched clergymen inhabiting the neighbourhood of the Fleet, had come into vogue from their very simplicity. The system led to untold excesses and difficulties. Couples, after thirty years of married life, might find themselves torn apart by an unsuspected pre-contract and their children bastardised. Heirs and heiresses in their teens might be yoked for life, without the knowledge of their guardians, to debased adventurers. A passing fancy or a night of depravity might mean the ruin of a life's happiness: for divorce was well-nigh impossible to obtain. Registers were falsified, dates altered; fraud and deception went hand in hand.

The task of remedying this disorder fell to the lot of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, to whom the recommendations of the committee were in due course submitted. He found much to alter in the clauses of their proposed bill, and took the task upon his own shoulders. Shortly, by the terms of his act, no marriage could be valid, unless celebrated by an Anglican clergyman in orders after the banns had been read in church for three Sundays in succession, exception only being made in the case of the Royal Family,<sup>1</sup> Jews and Quakers. Special licences were permitted, but, in the case of minors, only when the consent of their parents or guardians had been secured. No marriage could be celebrated except in a parish church

<sup>1</sup> The exclusion of the Royal Family was an afterthought. Hardwicke had included them in the original bill; but, at the instance of Cumberland and Fox, who represented that it was an indignity that the Princes of the Blood should be classed with the masses, the King gave orders that they should be struck out.

without a licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Clergymen infringing these enactments were made liable to transportation: and falsification of registers, which were made obligatory, was punishable by death. Amendment was made to almost every clause in the measure during its passage through the Commons; but its main provisions are still in use, and have received but slight alteration in intervening years.

The bill was introduced in the House of Lords on March 19, and passed the third reading on May 4, without any very serious opposition. The Duke of Bedford and some few other peers spoke against it, and voted for its rejection. In the Commons it excited a serious clamour, and raised the temper of the leading combatants to fever-pitch. Two debates only, those on the second and third readings, are reported in the *Parliamentary History*. For details of the speeches and incidents in other stages, often prolonged to the late hours of the evening, we have chiefly to trust to Horace Walpole, who could see little good in the bill, and besides was strongly biassed against the Pelham family. Pelham himself was probably in personal sympathy with its objects, and gave it his redoubled support, when, rightly or wrongly, he conceived a suspicion that the opposition was aimed more against himself than against its clauses.<sup>1</sup> The unwillingness of his friends to oppose his wishes and increase the difficulty of his position may account for the abstentions which were conspicuous in the later stages of its progress through the House. The divergence of opinion on the subject was most marked. Hardwicke, Pelham, the law-officers and Barrington were assisted by Egmont in support of the measure, while arraigned against it were Fox, Speaker Onslow, Nugent, Walpole, Charles Townshend and Bedford. Newcastle was lukewarm, and Granville too careful to expose his openly expressed dislike by opposing it publicly in the House of Lords.

<sup>1</sup> Tindal's *Continuation of Rapin*, ix. 466.



The bill passed the second reading on May 14.

"The Clandestine Marriage Bill, which I think will have sad effects, was upon a division committed yesterday. Nugent spoke admirably against it, and the whole House seem'd of his mind, when, upon a division, we who were against committing it were beat, 116 to 58. Complaisance to Lord Chancellor prevail'd, and it is not to be believ'd how strong a point he makes of it, and ev'ry lawyer in the House was sent down to vote for it. Buy *Considerations upon Clandestine Marriages*, by Dr Gally, rector of St Giles's, and you will see the bill with reasons. You may guess how earnest I am against the bill, when I tell you that I verily think that the legitimacy of the children of ev'ry family will come into question, if this bill passes, in Westminster Hall as frequently as their estates now do.

"The Attorney, who open'd it, gave up almost ev'ry objection; then Nugent spoke, then Lord Barrington very —.

"Then came the division. The Speaker gave it for the No's, and the House seem'd almost unanimous on our side till the division shew'd the contrary. On Monday next, it will be committed, and debated, on a question to leave the chair, thoroughly."<sup>1</sup>

Fox made his first contribution to the debate on May 21. He "neither spared the bill nor the author of it, as wher-ever he laid his finger, it was not wont to be light."<sup>2</sup> "Mr Fox mumbled the Chancellor and the lawyers, and pinned the plan of the bill upon a pamphlet he had found of Dr Gally's, where the doctor, recommending the French scheme of matrimony, says, 'It was found that fathers were too apt to forgive.' 'The Gospel, I thought,' said Mr Fox, 'enjoin'd forgiveness; but pious Dr Gally thinks fathers are too apt to forgive.'"<sup>3</sup> He was supported by Charles Townshend, Sir William Yonge and Fazakerley. The chief arguments brought to bear against the proposals were: the right of the subject to choose his own companion

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, May 15, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 297.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Letters*, iii. 161.

for life; the increased powers granted to parents and guardians; and the fears that the bill would encourage immorality, from the dislike of the poorer classes, and indeed of the rich, to proclaiming their marriages beforehand, and from the increased difficulties of obtaining the solemnisation of the ceremony.

The debates were resumed on the 23rd and 25th. "The House sat late each day, Mr Fox attacking and Mr Pelham defending with eager peevishness. The former repeated his censures on the Chancellor, which old Horace Walpole reproved."<sup>1</sup> It is clear, from his letters to his brother, how genuine were Fox's apprehensions of the dangers and distress which he conceived would arise upon the passing of the bill. He hinted at a belief that Pelham was not so enamoured of it as he made out, a supposition also alluded to by Horace Walpole, but one which probably lacked foundation. On May 24, he wrote to Ilchester: "We debate the Cl. Marriage Bill strenuously, but in vain. Ev'rybody in their opinion with us, but Mr Pelham, drove by Lord Chancellor, driving against his own opinion the House into passing a bill that will have more pernicious consequences than any I ever saw offer'd to the House. I am quite unhappy about it." And again, two days later:

"The Marriage Bill go's on as usual. I was yesterday for the 3d time in the House till near 11 at night in the Committee upon it, and we got through three clauses only. I fight strongly, and give great offence, I believe, both to those who drive and are driven in this cursed affair, which will pass by a majority of two to one or more, against the opinion of 4 in 5 of those who vote for it."

On May 28, the House sat till 3.30 in the morning, debating the clause which ordained that marriages celebrated contrary to the provisions of the act should be deemed null and void. Fox "at one in the morning

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 297.

spoke against it for above an hour, and laid open the chicanery and jargon of the lawyers, the pride of their Mufti,<sup>1</sup> and the arbitrary manner of enforcing the bill."

The debate on the 30th turned upon the powers of guardians and parents. Fox was again to be found in the forefront of the battle. He cast bitter ridicule upon the Chancellor, and drew the latter's son, Charles Yorke, to his feet in defence of his father, whose talents and position he eulogised in glowing terms. He warned Fox of the imprudence of his conduct. "It is new," said he, "in Parliament, it is new in politics, it is new in ambition." To this Fox replied: "Is it new in Parliament to be conscientious? I hope not! Is it new in politics? I am afraid it is! Is it new in ambition? It certainly is to attack such authority!" Pelham answered, and Fox again spoke, urging him not to force through the bill. "He knew," said he, "he should not be heard by above one-third of the House, but would speak so loud that he could be heard out of the House."<sup>2</sup>

The Committee stage closed on the 31st. Fox had a further opportunity of baiting the lawyers, this time Sir Robert Henley and the Solicitor-General,<sup>3</sup> for each had interpreted a passage, the meaning of which both had said was perfectly clear, in an entirely different sense. Rigby spent that evening at Holland House, where Fox expressed many hopes that the Duke of Bedford would

<sup>1</sup> As he termed the Chancellor (Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 298). Here Fox was on congenial ground. He compared the Court of Chancery and its proceedings to a great spider, a simile which Hogarth is said to have made use of in caricaturing Lord Hardwicke.

Fox hated lawyers and all their wiles. "Fox frequently attacked the lawyers. He loved disputing as much as they do, but, as he loved sense and argument, which they make a trade of perplexing, he could not bear a society who at once inverted the use of reason and the profession of justice," wrote Walpole (*Memoirs*, i. 130) at the time of the Regency Bill. His powers of argument were those of an advocate; he could do battle with the legal profession on their own ground. Yet he disliked the whole tribe, and never lost an opportunity of showing his aversion.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Murray.

again oppose when the bill was returned to the Lords. "He expected the Chancellor would fall severely upon him," wrote the former, "and he should be extremely glad to have you for his advocate."<sup>1</sup>

During the Report stage, on the following day, Fox moved to insert two clauses, both of which were disallowed. The best account of this debate is given in a letter to Newcastle from Claudius Amyand, his Under-Secretary<sup>2</sup>:

"We have at last finished the Report, and have had one division of 128 to 28, upon a clause proposed by Mr Fox, *that no marriage should be impeached after the death of the parties*. He likewise moved another clause, *that the issue of a marriage void by the bill should be legitimated by a subsequent legal marriage*; but, as he saw the point was not tenable, and was opposed even by Wilbraham, they did not divide upon it. Charles Townshend supported the last motion; and Ld Robt Bertie, Sr F. Drake, Col. Gore, Col. Haldane and the friends of Bloomsbury square voted for the first.

"The day has been more free than any preceding one from petulance and personality, tho' the epithets of cruel and unjust were often applied to the bill; and I am apt to think that the little support given to Fox's two motions have to some degree dejected him, tho' we are threatened with a very full debate on Monday."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Rigby to Bedford, June 2, 1753 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 126).

<sup>2</sup> June 1, 1753 (Add. MSS. 32,732).

<sup>3</sup> Rigby gave Bedford a somewhat different account of the proceedings (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 126): "Yesterday, as I mentioned, we sat till ten, and a much duller day I never knew in Parliament. We had one division, whether a clause offered by Fox, to legitimate all children born before wedlock in case the parents married afterwards (as is the case in civil law and in the law of Scotland), should be read a second time, or not. We were but 26 to 102, Mr Pelham himself dividing the House. We did not mean to divide ourselves, not much, I believe, intending to push the clause, but bawling a very noisy Aye; and the Speaker, wishing well to it, said the Ayes had it, and we were obliged to go forth, many of the enemies of the bill even voting against us." A reference to the *Journals of the House of Commons* bears out the correctness of Amyand's statement, which was evidently in the nature of an official report.



On June 4, the bill was read a third time.

"We have just passed the bill by 125 to 156. . . . Mr Fox began by declaring, in a mild manner, that he wished to have avoided all the debate that had passed upon the bill, that he had possibly been warm, and had given offence which he never meant to do, and that when he applied the words cruel, etc., etc., to the bill, he was far from applying them to the authors of it. That he did not first name *the other House*, but it was named by others, with a view of carrying with it more authority than it ought to do. After all this apology for warmth and personality, he spoke with great honour of my Lord Chancellor, and hoped his Lordship would propose, when the bill returned to the House of Lords, to postpone it till next year; and that if his Lordship would then undertake to bring in a new bill upon the same principles (which he always allowed to be good), he was very sure it would be as perfect as human abilities could make it; but the present bill he still called scandalous, etc., etc. He instanced the happiness of his own marriage, and the cruelty of the late Lord Berkeley of Stratton to the present lord, as arguments against the consent of parents. Upon the whole his speech was not masterly. It was full of recantation for his warm behaviour, and was void of reason and argument. Charles Townshend spoke well, and the Solicitor-General admirably. He turned the passage of Livy, *sola innocentia vivere*, with great neatness against Fox, and stung him sorely in many parts of his argument without being scurrilous. He seemed to avoid saying anything of my Lord Chancellor, as Fox had made so ample a panegyric." <sup>1</sup>

Fox spoke for an hour and a half. He pointed out that the objection raised to throwing out the measure on second reading—that it would be a mark of disrespect to the Lords—could not here be applied. The measure had been altered in almost every clause: in fact it was practically a new bill. To instance his point he held up to the House his copy, upon which the new matter had

<sup>1</sup> C. Amyand to Newcastle, June 4, 1753 (Add. MSS. 32,732).

been inserted in red ink. "How bloody it looks," said Murray, who sat near him. "Yes, but you cannot say I did it," returned Fox, and, parodying the lamentation of Antony over the robe of Cæsar, pointed to the Attorney-General, "Look what a rent the learned Casca made; through this, the well-beloved Brutus<sup>1</sup> stabbed." His further arguments were based upon the well-worn lines of the earlier speeches in the debate. Young women would be in additional danger of treachery and seduction; marriage between class and class would be prevented, to the detriment of both; and increase of the population would be checked by the new difficulties which were to be imposed upon matrimony among the poorer classes. In conclusion, he said that to annul a marriage which was good in divine and moral law, would be to offend against the precept, "Whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder."<sup>2</sup>

The House of Lords sat on the 6th to receive the alterations. Bedford, who attempted a speech directed against the whole scope of the bill, was reminded by the Lord Chancellor that he must confine himself to the various amendments under discussion. He found little support, for Granville, contrary to his promise, did not attend the House. Hardwicke did not overlook the opportunity for revenge on Fox and his other detractors. Reading portions of his speech from a written paper, he excused the warmth of "the young man,"<sup>3</sup> as mere exuberance of youth, but singled out Fox as the object of a bitter flow of invective. He said "a dark, gloomy and insidious genius, who was an engine of personality and faction, had been making connections and trying to form a party, but his designs had been seen through and defeated." Attacks upon himself, as head of the law, were attacks upon the King and State. "This behaviour was not liked. It had been taken up with dignity, and the in-

<sup>1</sup> Pelham (Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 301).

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary History*, xv. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Townshend.

cendiary had been properly reprov'd ; this was not the way to popularity or favour. He could take upon him to say that person knows so by this time ; a beam of light had broken in upon him." That Fox's tardy repentance had done nothing to appease his wrath was clear. " I despise," said he, " the invective and I despise the recantation ; I despise the scurrility (for scurrility I must call it) and I reject the adulation." <sup>1</sup>

Fox was not present to hear the rebuke, being at the time in attendance upon a party of ladies at Vauxhall. But he assured his friends, on being informed of what had taken place, that only the immediate termination of the session prevented him from getting even with the Chancellor.

It seems that Pelham laboured to patch up the ill-feeling between Hardwicke and Fox, though he said to the latter that neither would forgive. No open rupture took place between them. The Chancellor was fully aware of Fox's value to the Government, and was content to make personal antipathy subservient to ministerial expediency. There can have been no foundation for the rumours that Fox was to be dismissed. He was too important an asset to be lightly removed ; but nevertheless, if we may credit Walpole, the possibility had not escaped him. " If they turn me out," he said, in the course of a conversation with Cumberland, " I shall not acquit Mr Pelham, nor shall I spare him. Let him raise up Murray. Mr Pelham knows he has betrayed him, but is willing to forget it. I know he fears me still more ; he has often told me I was like Mr Pultney. It may be vanity ; but if I am stronger than Murray, I am ten times stronger than Mr Pelham." <sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding their differences he and Pelham outwardly remained good friends. " It has been as industriously reported here as in the

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 304 ; Rev. T. Birch to P. Yorke, June 9, 1753, printed in *Parliamentary History*, xv. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 305.

country that Mr Pelham and I are quarrel'd. It is, however, as far from true as ever ; and we were, I think, never better together." <sup>1</sup>

Pelham had also helped Fox with the King, by contradicting the malicious rumours which were in the air.<sup>2</sup> He had assured his Majesty that Fox promised to avoid close connection with the Bedford party, as long as he remained in office. " I shall see the King on Monday. They have made, or try'd to make (I can't tell you which), him believe that this opposition of mine was an attempt to set up a party to oppose his measures." Cumberland had advised Fox to seek this audience. " He will talk on the bill," said the Duke. " Let him ; and you, who could not be convinced in the House, be convinced by him." <sup>3</sup>

There are two different accounts of the interview. Chesterfield states that Fox complained of Hardwicke's attack upon him to the King, " who answered him coolly that he was always against the aggressor, and that he (Fox) was the aggressor. Upon this Fox made very mean submission to the ministers, and invited them all to dine with him at Holland House." <sup>4</sup> Walpole's version, under the circumstances, is probably the more correct, though it is clear that the King approved of Hardwicke's conduct. He remarks, that as Fox was beginning to speak of the Chancellor the King interrupted him with, " Oh, Sir, I believe you had given him cause ; now it is pretty even." Fox then implored him to believe him, on his honour, that he had been guilty of no factious conduct, a statement which his Majesty accepted. He repeated, however, that Fox had been much suspected, and gave some details of the accusations, including one of recent balls at Holland House to which the Duchess of Bedford was bidden, but

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, August 7, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 306.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, June 8, 1753.

<sup>4</sup> Chesterfield to S. Dayrolles, June 23, 1753 (*Letters of Lord Chesterfield*, iv. 75).



not Pelham's daughters.<sup>1</sup> Fox again disclaimed political connection with the Bedfords, and said, "Such intrigues, Sir, would be worse in me than in any man living, as nobody blamed such intrigues in those who undermined Sir Robert Walpole so much as I."

No evidence, indeed, can be adduced to show that Fox had any ulterior motive in his opposition to the bill. He appears to have been imbued with a genuine belief that its provisions were contrary to the best interests of the people and of the state; and there is much to be said for his objections to the individual hardships which the retrospective clauses of the bill were certain to impose. Opposition to the act had certainly the effect of introducing into it many real improvements. But, carried away by the glamour of his own conjugal happiness, which he considered due to the absence of repressive legislation, he was blind to the enormities and the inequalities of the system in vogue. His dislike of the act was shared by his descendants, and became a family fetich. Charles James Fox introduced a bill to repeal it in 1772, and again in 1781<sup>2</sup>; and his nephew, Lord Holland, was equally slow in realising the advantages which had accrued to every class of society from Hardwicke's efforts. The fact that Henry Fox's own colleagues and contemporaries were able to foretell the falsity of his prophecies accentuates the delusion under which he laboured. His judgment, so clear on ordinary occasions, was largely obscured by the personal feelings which he unwittingly introduced into the conflict.

<sup>1</sup> The list is still preserved of the company at a ball on May 1. Sixty-two persons sat down to supper. Among them was the Duchess of Bedford.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 83, 93; also Wraxall's *Memoirs*, June 15, 1781 (ii. 126): Lord J. Russell's *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i. 265. The former bill was rejected by the Commons. The latter passed the Lower House, but was rejected by the Lords. Fox pledged himself to renew the motion from the Treasury bench, if ever he came into power.

The savagery of his assault upon Hardwicke is more difficult to explain. It can only be palliated by the intensity of his feelings on the subject. He had never forgiven the Chancellor, and incidentally Newcastle, for their intrigues at the time of Sir Robert Walpole's fall. "Fox really loved that man," said Hillsborough to Dodington.<sup>1</sup> The feeling of resentment against what he considered Hardwicke's treachery was ever present in his breast. A further incentive, doubtless, was the Chancellor's conduct at the time of the Regency Act: for Cumberland had always imputed to Hardwicke the slights then inflicted upon him. A well-directed thrust from Fox on behalf of his patron would not have come amiss, nor would it have lacked encouragement.

But, whatever the inducement, the personalities in which Fox indulged his spite were to the last degree unpardonable. He laid himself open, alike from friend and foe, to charges of petulance and arbitrariness. It is true that for a few days the mob signified their approbation by dragging his carriage through the streets<sup>2</sup>; but these signs of popular approval soon died away. Walpole wrote that Fox had "wantonly and unnecessarily insulted the Chancellor, and had even manifested some fear at having done so. . . . The time advanced but too fast, when the provocation offered to Yorke and the suspicion of his want of a determined spirit were of essential detriment to him." Lord Waldegrave described his conduct as being "a very capital mistake"<sup>3</sup>; and Lord Breadalbane wrote to Hardwicke from Edinburgh that he had heard Fox's behaviour universally blamed.<sup>4</sup> The general consensus of opinion was against him. It was felt that this introduction of immoderate personalities was an offence against the canons of political etiquette, and that a recantation under the pressure of public feeling was no justification.

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *Mrs Bellamy's Apology for Her Life*, iii. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 24.      <sup>4</sup> *Yorke's Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 124.

Fox had, in fact, done grave damage to his reputation. He had allowed his extravagant hostility to Hardwicke to run away with his good sense. He had thought to crush him with one blow, and, when that blow recoiled upon himself, he cringed and faltered. He had taken a downward step in his career, though for the moment the fact was not apparent. A bitter enemy, of his own making, was henceforward to meet him at every turn. Hardwicke's star was in the ascendant, and his power of offence was soon to be redoubled. Fox was to repent at his leisure the folly of crossing swords with the Lord Chancellor.

## CHAPTER X

BEYOND the repeal of the Jew Bill the proceedings of the two Houses during the winter of 1753-4 contain little of interest. A bill for an extension of the Mutiny Act, to include troops sent to serve under the East India Company, was introduced in the Commons early in February by the Secretary-at-War, and met with vigorous opposition. His speech is not recorded. We are told that Clive regarded him as "the patron of the East India Company," a designation doubtless caused by his attitude upon this occasion.<sup>1</sup> Lord Egmont and his friends were unwilling to accept this novel proposal, to vest in a trading company powers which had been granted with reluctance to the Crown itself. The justification of the measure was contained in the absolute necessity of securing efficiency for the military forces in the East. It was approved in the Commons by a large majority, and was passed through the Upper House without amendment.

We also obtain a glimpse of Fox in the debate on the repeal of the Bribery in Elections Act, unsuccessfully moved by Sir John Barnard. On the authority of Lord Barnard, no unprejudiced witness, we are told that Fox spoke for the repeal, although he was said to have given his word to Pelham not to do so. A command from Cumberland is suggested as the reason for this breach of faith.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of preparations for the ensuing general election, Pelham's health gave way. He had been ailing for some months, but had returned to London, to all appearance much improved by a course of waters at

<sup>1</sup> *Forrest's Life of Clive*, i. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Dedington's Diary*, p. 265.



Scarborough. A sudden chill caused his death on March 6, after three days' illness. "Now I shall have no more peace," was the King's remark, when informed of his Minister's death.

Indeed all was chaos. The qualities which had stood Pelham in good stead during his ten years of office were uprightness and common sense rather than any pretence at brilliancy. He had the gift of knowing when to give way, and had thus avoided the rocks upon which a more adventurous pilot would have undoubtedly cast his ship. His placid nature had enabled him to overcome the difficulties thrust upon him by his more volatile brother. His tact had proved a powerful factor in controlling the diverse factions of his Administration.

It was to Hardwicke that George turned in his perplexity. "The Chancellor is the only resource; his wisdom, temper and authority, joined to the Duke of Newcastle's ability as Secretary of State, are the dependence of the Government," wrote Pitt to Temple on March 7.<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Devonshire was also summoned from Chatsworth, but only arrived on March 9, in time to refuse a "faint offer" of the Treasury Board. The King signified to Hardwicke that he had "no favourite for this succession"<sup>2</sup>; but hoped that "any person who had flown in his face" (clearly indicating Pitt) would not be recommended by the Cabinet. Hardwicke, rightly or wrongly, concluded that his inclination lay in the direction of Fox, and took steps to counteract it by all the means in his power. In addition to his natural antipathy to the man himself, and his fear of the extinction of his own party's hopes should Fox obtain Pelham's place, he professed to foresee a danger to the state in the friendship between him and Cumberland. A further power—the army—would be added to that wielded by

<sup>1</sup> *Grenville Papers*, i. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Archbishop of Canterbury, March 11, 1754 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 206).

the late Minister. "Here would be the Treasury, the House of Commons and the sword joined together." He therefore decided, in consultation with his friends, to advise the King to divide the offices which had been held by Pelham. The Chancellorship of the Exchequer should be given to a member of the Commons, the Treasury to a peer.

If it had been decided to keep the offices together, the field of selection for the dual post was limited. The choice was in fact confined to Sir George Lee, Murray, Pitt and Fox. Of these, the first named, a Tory, had been Treasurer of the late Prince of Wales's household, and was now the nominee of the Leicester House party. He had the least claim of the four, but was "an unexceptionable man, sensible, of good character . . . and obnoxious to no set of men."<sup>1</sup> Murray, the Solicitor-General, was a Scotsman, and had recently been suspected of Jacobite tendencies. Conscious of these limitations, he took speedy opportunities of disclosing a personal desire to remain in his own profession. Pitt's chances of success were seriously discounted by the dislike of the King. He had also no party to push his claims; and was afflicted with chronic ill-health. Fox's claims were undeniable. He was on better terms with all parties than any one, had been a uniform supporter of the Whigs, and was the ablest organiser and the leading debater in the House of Commons. He was well with the King through his friendship with Cumberland, whose position as head of the army gave him great weight. In other ways, however, his connection with the Duke was a more doubtful asset. The Princess of Wales and her friends hated and feared her brother-in-law. She was, therefore, strongly prejudiced against the success of his chief lieutenant. The Scots too loathed "Butcher Cumberland," and besides, as we have seen, had a personal grudge against Fox for his conduct at the time of the Porteous riots. Further, Fox had personally

affronted the Lord Chancellor in the Marriage Act debates, and had uniformly abused and belittled the profession of the law in his speeches in the House of Commons. His relations with Newcastle lacked cordiality, and the fact that he had been suspected by some of wishing to supersede Pelham in his life-time as chief Minister did not endear him to that family.<sup>1</sup> Strong opposition in several quarters had therefore to be expected.

It was unfortunate for Fox that the King's choice of an adviser had fallen upon Hardwicke. And, to make matters worse, a serious error of judgment on his own part was to place a fresh obstacle in his path. He allowed his eagerness for the high office, which he now considered his due, to outstrip his good-feeling and sense of propriety. Pelham died at six in the morning, and before his friend's body was even cold, Fox had called on Hartington and on Pitt, had communicated with Newcastle, and during the morning had sent "three very humiliating and apologising messages" to Hardwicke.<sup>2</sup> Possibly he saw his mistake after the mischief was done, for his activity seems to have been confined to the day of Pelham's death. Horace Walpole's statement that "Fox acted with reserve and retirement, and expected to be wooed,"<sup>3</sup> must refer to March 7 and the succeeding days.

There is no corroboration of Walpole's remark, that the Chancellor sent Lord Anson to Fox to offer a reconciliation. On the contrary, Hardwicke spent his time in artfully insinuating to the King that Fox would not be very generally acceptable. Yet he recognised that the Secretary-at-War must have preferment; though his personal inclination was to exclude him, and to insist on a

<sup>1</sup> Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 24. Suspicions were aroused in Fox's mind during a conversation in July with Andrew Stone, that Lord Lincoln was responsible for whatever influence had been brought "*par malice*" to bear on his uncle, Newcastle (H. Fox to Hartington, July 13, 1754. Devonshire MSS.). Lincoln was his Grace's nephew.

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Archbishop of Canterbury, March 11, 1754.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, i. 330.

prominent place for Pitt. But to carry matters to these extremes might be to throw the King into the arms of Fox and the large body of Whigs who were prepared to act with him. The Chancellor shrank from so great a hazard. The Secretaryship of State for the Southern Department seemed a reasonable solution of the difficulty, and as such it was offered to Fox. "If the power of the Treasury, the secret service and the House of Commons is once settled in safe hands, the office will carry very little efficient power along with it."<sup>1</sup>

Some light is thrown upon Pitt's attitude by his letters to Lyttelton and the Grenvilles, to Temple, and later to Newcastle and the Lord Chancellor. He desired "to support the King's Government in present, and maintain the Princess's authority and power in a future contingency." He continued: "As a necessary consequence of this system, I wish to see as little power in Fox's hands as possible, because he is incompatible with the main part, and indeed of the whole of this plan."<sup>2</sup> "Fox is odious," he wrote to Temple on the following day, "and will have difficulty to stand in a future time."<sup>3</sup> Yet at first he looked on him as destined for the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and predicted that Newcastle would fill the vacancy at the Treasury.<sup>4</sup> Pitt had no personal wish to see Fox obtain promotion, though he acknowledged his claims. But when, a fortnight later, he found that his own aspirations were again to be disappointed, he pointed out to Newcastle, in a letter full of reproach, how bitter was the pill. Had it been gilded by the presence of Fox

<sup>1</sup> Hardwicke to Archbishop of Canterbury, March 11, 1754 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 208). Dodington suggests that an even deeper plot was afoot. It was hoped that Fox would spurn anything less than the Treasury; and that by this unreasonable demand he would alienate the favour of the King (*Diary*, p. 269).

<sup>2</sup> W. Pitt to Sir G. Lyttelton, March 10, 1754 (Lord Rosebery's *Chatham*, p. 321).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>4</sup> W. Pitt to Sir G. Lyttelton and the Grenvilles, March 7, 1754 (*ibid.*, p. 317).



or Murray at the head of the House of Commons or in high office, he would have accepted the situation. In that case the necessity would have been apparent. But to see himself passed over for an inferior, such as Robinson, was a slight which he could not and would not endure in silence.

Although the King had nominally invited the advice and suggestions of his Cabinet, the proposals which that body commended to his notice at their meeting on the evening of March 12 were in reality his own, prompted, as we have seen, by Hardwicke.<sup>1</sup> Newcastle was to take the Treasury; Legge to become Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Holderness might be transferred to the Secretaryship of the Northern Province, and Fox fill his vacancy in the Southern.

Before the King confirmed these inspired recommendations on the 13th, Newcastle had accepted the proud position of head of the state—unwillingly and in response to the entreaties of his friends, if we are to credit Hardwicke's letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>2</sup> Fox wrote on the evening of the Cabinet meeting: "By Lord Hartington voluntarily came from the D. of Newcastle an offer that I should be Secry of State and have the management of the H. of Commons. I sent a cheerful acceptance, and was, more than it was reasonable, thank'd for it."<sup>3</sup> He does not make any allusion to that portion of the message, referred to by Walpole, "not imparted to the Council, that his Grace would reserve to himself the disposal of the secret-service money, though he would always exactly communicate to Mr Fox how it had been employed."<sup>4</sup> Further light is thrown on the position by a letter to Lord Digby from his brother, Henry Digby, who added that Fox "sent word that he would accept of, or rather that he acquiesced in, the proposal of

<sup>1</sup> Minute of the Cabinet, March 12, 1754 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 191).

<sup>2</sup> March 11, 1754.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Marlborough, March 22, 1754.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs*, i. 331.

making him Secretary of State, tho' he did not much like it." <sup>1</sup>

By his detractors, this hesitation, or rather dissatisfaction, on Fox's part may be accounted for by the disappointment which he felt at his failure to secure the highest office in the State. But it may also be easily explained in a different manner. As we have already seen, he had taken but little active part in foreign politics. His energies, anterior to this date, had been restricted to other fields. The duties of the new office would necessarily force him into an atmosphere of which he had no previous experience. He felt, doubtless, that his talents would have been put to better use at the Treasury. Indeed, his remark to Lord Digby, seemingly in jest, may well be taken seriously: "Now what do you think of this new Secretary of State? Why that he is got into the place in England that he is most unfit for. So he thinks, I can assure you." <sup>2</sup> As yet, however, he believed he was to be supreme in the Commons, and was content to go forward.

On the morning of the 13th, Fox accompanied Hartington to call on Hardwicke, with whom a reconciliation was effected. Thence they turned their steps to Newcastle House. There a rude shock awaited the budding Secretary of State. He was to discover that his Grace had no intention whatever of carrying out the conditions which had been communicated to him on the previous evening. Pelham, said Newcastle, had never disclosed the disposal of the secret-service money, nor would he. Nominations to places were to be reserved solely for his own choice, recommendations for any member of the House of Commons. He also announced that he should settle any outstanding questions regarding the coming elections with Lord Dupplin, and should acquaint

<sup>1</sup> March 14, 1754 (*Hist. MSS. Comm.* viii, App. p. 222).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Digby, March 12, 1754 (*Hist. MSS. Comm.* viii, App. p. 220).

Fox with them afterwards. In vain Fox pointed out that as Pelham was leader of the House of Commons as well as head of the Treasury, he had had no need of a confidant. How could *he* deal with the members without sufficient knowledge of who had, or who had not received "gratifications." To wield authority under such circumstances was to attempt an impossibility. Hartington was not backward in pointing out the altered position in which his friend was now placed ; and was again sent for that night by Newcastle. The latter "would not deny the breach of his engagements, but honestly declared that he would not stand by them."<sup>1</sup> He declared "that he did not intend Mr Fox should have any power whatever out of his own office."<sup>2</sup> So at last the murder was out. Fox was to be appeased with the maximum of promotion and the minimum of real power.

Fox was dumfounded at the difficulties which had so unexpectedly arisen, and consulted his friends. Cumberland counselled him most strongly to withdraw his acceptance of office. Horace Walpole, whose letter of advice appears to have been written before Newcastle's change of attitude had transpired, hinted at opposition and threw doubts upon the advisability of union with Newcastle in any form. We have only Fox's reply from which to guess at his arguments.

" March 13, 1754.

" DR HORI,

" I agree with you in almost ev'ry word of your kind letter, except as to what will follow from my union with the D. of Newcastle, with whom you will not see me united. I do not know how I can avoid accepting ; if you do, tell me. Would you advise me to continue Secretary-at-War ; for the promise, on which I accepted this, is notoriously

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 332.

<sup>2</sup> H. Digby to Digby, March 14.

broke at the first conference this morning? If I am Secy of State, it is to complain from the first moment.

Yrs

ever

H. Fox.

"I'll call on you at noon to-morrow."<sup>1</sup>

It remained for Hanbury-Williams to clinch Fox's determination, in a long letter demonstrating the difficulties which would undoubtedly assail him in so equivocal a situation.<sup>2</sup> "Pray at least insist upon the Northern Province," he added in a postscript. "I think your insisting upon that will be a kind of touch stone as to the confidence they profess reposing in you."

Fortified by their approval, and by that of Hartington, Fox wrote as follows to the Duke of Newcastle :

"*March ye 14th, 1754.*

"MY LORD DUKE,

"As your Grace is to wait upon His Majesty this morning, I must lose no time to desire your Grace would not acquaint the King that I have accepted of the office of Secretary of State. But if His Majesty has already been acquainted of my acceptance of it, your Grace will, I hope, tell His Majesty that I purpose with the utmost submission to beg His Majesty's leave to decline it.

"It is impossible that His Majesty could think of raising me to so exalted a station but with a design that I should, with and *under* your Grace, have the management of his affairs in the House of Commons. This was the whole tenor of your Grace's messages to me by Lord Hartington, which your Grace's conferences with Lord Hartington and me yesterday morning, and with Lord Hartington last night, have totally contradicted. Unable therefore to answer what I dare say is His Majesty's expectation (tho' your Grace has frankly declared it not to be yours), that I should be answerable for His Majesty's affairs in

<sup>1</sup> Waller MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Sir C. Hanbury-Williams to H. Fox [March 1754]; Ilchester to Digby, March 23, 1754 (*Hist. MSS. Comm.* viii. App. p. 225).



the House of Commons, I beg leave to remain where I am, heartily wishing success to His Majesty's affairs and contributing all that shall be in the power of a single man towards it.

"I am, &c."

On the 14th, Fox waited on Lady Yarmouth,<sup>1</sup> and gave her a copy of this letter, which she promised to show to the King. Newcastle and Hardwicke both had audiences during the day, and the latter sent to Fox asking him to call next morning. The interview lasted three hours: Hartington was also present. The Chancellor was very civil, and attempted to soften the abrupt utterances of his Grace of Newcastle. "The word *management* explained, but never so as to mean the management of the House of Commons." <sup>2</sup> Fox adhered to his resolution of remaining Secretary-at-War. He set down his motives in a letter to the Duke of Marlborough, pointing out that he would consider it dishonourable to pursue any other course.

"When, with Lord Hartington, I saw the D. of Newcastle, he shew'd me I was to have no direction or lead in the H. of Commons, nor gave any hopes of confidence or favour from him (for I never desir'd to go to the King nor to anybody but to his Grace) sufficient to do his business. At night he sent for Lord Hartington, and confirm'd not his promise but his breach of promise in these words: 'Who desires Mr Fox to be answerable for anybody but himself in the H. of Commons?' I then was to take this great office on the foot of being quite a cypher, and being known to have been told so. I thought it better to remain Secry-at-War with, than to be Secry of State without, credit. To take the office from the D.

<sup>1</sup> Amalie Sophie de Walmoden had attracted George II's attentions in Hanover in 1735. After the Queen's death he brought her over to England, and installed her at St James's Palace. She died in 1811, at a very advanced age.

<sup>2</sup> Ilchester to Digby, March 18, 1754 (*Hist. MSS. Comm.* viii. App. p. 224).

of Newcastle on these conditions and observe them, would be to be a fool ; to take the office from the D. of Newcastle on such conditions, in order, when I could, to do him mischief, would be to be a knave. I would not be either. I have declin'd a great office ; he has lost the opportunity of gaining a faithful servant. There were circumstances attending this that shew he makes no scruple to break his word, and even to own it. As a politician, I should have wink'd at this, and watch'd an opportunity to return it. But I chose the honester part. This will be in general explain'd by the copy I send you of my letter to the D. of N. of last Wednesday. I remain therefore a little, little man, which I think is better than a little, great man, and, which is best of all, an honest man ; and (except poor dear Charles's danger)<sup>1</sup> an happy man.

"The Duke was totally reconcil'd to the D. of Newcastle on this occasion, and shew'd goodness to me beyond expression. You may be assur'd I have done nothing without his approbation."<sup>2</sup>

On the 16th, Fox had an audience with the King, who was "civil, or rather patient, in hearing all he had to say."<sup>3</sup> But his enemies had been beforehand in poisoning the royal mind. Cumberland had woefully neglected his opportunities of counteracting their intrigues against his friend and protégé. Newcastle and the Chancellor had successfully magnified Fox's refusal to take office into an arbitrary demand for extraordinary power. Nor was the latter successful in dissipating the illusion, for he wrote to Hanbury-Williams on March 20, "H.M. is as angry with me as if I was already in opposition."<sup>4</sup>

"The King was possessed of two things : the first, that I had insisted on the government and secret service money of the House of Commons, independent of the D. of Newcastle. *You would be above ev'ry body, above the*

<sup>1</sup> Charles James Fox was very seriously ill at this time, and his case was almost given up on the 25th.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Marlborough, March 22, 1754.

<sup>3</sup> Ilchester to Digby, March 18, 1754.

<sup>4</sup> Phillips MSS.

*whole Council*, says he. Stop here, my dear Lord, and think of the shameless want of veracity in the men we have to deal with. I endeavoured appealing to your Lordship to undeceive H.M.

"The other thing was, that I ought to be responsible for nobody. Ld Sunderland, he said, placed little or no confidence in Craggs; and in short avowed in the most restrained sense what he prov'd the D. of Newcastle's intention contrary to his promise.

"I shewed him in this way how dangerous a man I must be if Secretary of State, and begg'd him to judge of my intention to act like an honest man and do no mischief, by my not taking into my hands so great an engine to do mischief with, as taking, with my weight (for I spoke truly and not modestly) in the H. of Commons, the office of Secretary of State without being responsible to the Minister.

"I did not intend to write so much. My declining was accepted, and I was dismissed, rather graciously than otherwise." <sup>1</sup>

Walpole gives us further details of the conversation :

" ' It was a great place,' said the King, ' I designed for you ; I thought I did much for you : many Dukes have had it.' Fox answered, ' Sir, your Majesty has been told that I asked for too much.' The King said, ' You did ; the secret service money has never been in other hands than the person's at the head of the Treasury.' ' Perhaps, Sir,' replied Fox, ' I did ask too much ; but they were more in fault who promised and broke their word ; Lord Hartington is witness. . . . I prefer serving your Majesty as a private man, without seeing the Duke of Newcastle. He promised me his confidence ; I never can believe him more. I am honest ; he is not.' The King concluded, ' I know it cannot be made up ; you are not apt to depart from your resolution. It is a great office ! but I have learned *nemini obtrudere beneficium*.' " <sup>2</sup>

General surprise was expressed at Fox's attitude.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, March 16, 1754 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 335.

Chesterfield, judging the situation from his own crabbed feelings, thought that he would have had better opportunities as Secretary of State than as a private gentleman for the revenge which he felt convinced he must desire. But his reputation was certainly enhanced by his behaviour. "I hear," wrote Henry Digby to his brother, "that the Speaker praises him very much, and says he has acted with great honour; he is very sorry for what has happened, but as things turned out Mr Fox could not do otherwise than he has done."

He had, however, to face some dissatisfaction among his friends and intimates. Legge, who, from distrust of Newcastle, had taken the Exchequer unwillingly and disliked the feeling of isolation in a hostile camp, announced that Fox had acted imprudently. Ilchester was still more outspoken in his criticisms of what had occurred. He said openly that his brother had played into the enemy's hands, and wrote to Digby that he grieved the situation had been allowed to "slip through his fingers merely through punctilio." In letters, dated March 21 and 23, he further suggested that Henry was at last fully aware of his own folly, and that his spirits were in consequence at the lowest ebb. Ilchester's personal views and aspirations may have blinded him to the real facts of the case, for Henry Fox's own letter to Digby<sup>1</sup> does not convey at all the same impression. The annoyance which he expresses therein is mainly due to the loss of an opportunity of benefiting his relatives. For the moment, at least, he felt no remorse for the course which he had mapped out.

"It is impossible to blame me but in point of prudence, and that prudence would, by those very people who now blame my want of it, have been call'd by, and, duly examined, would have deserv'd, another name. And yet I dare say I shall, by the world, who look only on events,

<sup>1</sup> March 23, 1754.



be thoroughly condemn'd. I shall remain where I am, in my own opinion, with honour ; in that of many others, in a sort of disgrace. And a sort of disgrace it is ; but taking it would have been another sort of disgrace, which I could not digest." <sup>1</sup>

To the Duke of Richmond he had written, a few days before : "*What can't be done with honour, can't be done at all.* That is my maxim, and I must look no farther. I could not take this place on the reduc'd terms and under a man who had, and owns he has, broke his word, without feeling dishonourable."

His views, thus forcibly enunciated, seem inconsistent with any serious desire to reconsider his refusal. But some scheme emanating from his associates was evidently in the making,<sup>2</sup> unless the overwrought nerves of Newcastle and his confederates had magnified a shadowy message into a dangerous intrigue. The Secretaryship of State had been offered to Sir Thomas Robinson ; but before the King had given his formal consent, Legge arrived at Newcastle House on the morning of the 19th, to say that as his Grace had "*talked*" so reasonably to Lord Hartington when they had met on the 16th, the latter thought that Mr Fox "*should accept without conditions.*" <sup>3</sup> Apparently, new propositions, containing no mention of Fox's name, were in the air, and the Chancellor looked on the omission as "*not only captious but insidious.*" Newcastle replied to Legge that he should obey the King's commands whatever they were ; but took steps to defeat any new project which Hartington might have in view, by arranging for Holderness to be first in to see the King next morning and endeavour to gain permission to make an announcement of Robinson's appointment.

Fox was probably not cognizant of this negotiation at

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady Hervey, March 28, 1754.

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 18, 19, 23, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,734).

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, March 19, 1754 (Add. MSS. 35,414).

the time ; for he subsequently stated that the project was originated and carried through by Hartington, with the help of Legge, whose interest it was to establish a friend at court.

Parliament was dissolved on April 9. The general election which followed was a triumph for party management and corruption. Forty-two seats only, out of the whole House of Commons, were contested. The Whigs obtained a larger majority than in any Parliament since the Revolution of 1788. Fox was again returned for Windsor ; but appears to have shown little personal activity in the general campaign. Any part which he took, was directed, as we shall see, against Newcastle's nominees.

On May 31, Parliament met for a short session of five days, "to constitute its essence," as Walpole puts it. "By the Regency Bill, the last Parliament that should sit in the life of the King, was to revive on his death ; and the new one was too acceptable to the Ministry, not to be insured."<sup>1</sup>

On the day of the prorogation, a conversation took place between the Lord Chancellor and the Duke of Devonshire, which infused new life into Fox and his friends. Notes on a discussion between Newcastle's follower, Andrew Stone, and Fox on August 29, upon what had actually passed at the interview, give us the basis of the subsequent negotiations.

"Lord Chancellor told him [Stone] that he went to Devonshire House, the day the Parlt broke up, to pay his respects, and give His Grace an account of what had pass'd in the short sessions and the King's motives, etc. That then his Lordship did say that Mr Fox's not appearing caus'd speculation ; that he had been sworn without, but had not been sworn within doors. People were at a stand and thought it strange, but went no farther. That then the D. of Devonshire said he was sorry the arrangement propos'd on Mr Pelham's death had not taken place, and *he believed Mr Fox was very sorry for it too ;* that

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 339.

his Grace wish'd it could be set right again and *believ'd there was a disposition in Mr Fox*, but then he must have rank equal to any body in the H. of Commons and be a Cabinet Counsellor. To this Lord Chancellor said he saw at that time those objections which are not since vanish'd, but did not think *he ought single to give a negative to a proposition of the D. of Devonshire's*.<sup>1</sup>

"Mr Fox said this state of the case totally alter'd it, for certainly Ld Chancellor might take a proposal of the D. of Devonshire's into consideration, and decline it civilly. 'But if without meaning any thing' ('He certainly meant nothing,' says Mr Stone). 'If without meaning any thing' (continued Mr Fox), 'he first enquir'd of the D. of Devonshire into my disposition.' 'My Lord sees the inference,' says Mr Stone, '& says he first indeed mention'd your name, as to yr not being sworn in Parliament, &c.' But the rest, he says (I think he said *insists*), sprang from the D. of Devonshire. Mr Stone several times said Lord Chancellor meant nothing; particularly when I ask'd Mr Stone how his Lordship would construe his telling Ld Hartington to tell the D. of Devonshire, that he would turn it in his thoughts at Wimple, and did not doubt, if there was the same disposition in others as in him, that in the course of the summer something might be found out. 'That was too much,' says Mr Stone. 'Ay,' says Mr Fox, 'if he meant nothing.' 'He certainly meant nothing,' says Mr Stone.

"Lord Hartington will give an account of the previous steps, and of what else pass'd at this interview. But I thought the D. of Devonshire might like to see thus much in writing. As far as it go's, I take upon me to say this account is exact, but I will *swear* to the words of the material and essential part of it.

"H. Fox."

"August 30, 1754."

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle has also preserved a memorandum of Stone's conversation with Fox. There is one very material difference. "Mr Fox asserts that my Lord Chancellor said to the Duke of Devonshire, 'Does your Grace know Mr Fox's way of thinking or his disposition?' 'No, my Lord, I have not seen Mr Fox for some time, but my Lord Hartington would be the proper person to know it by.'" (Add. MSS. 35.414.)

<sup>2</sup> Holland House MSS.

The whole significance of the affair turned upon who had first set the ball rolling. If Hardwicke, as Devonshire must have reported, it seems incredible that he should have done so from *malice prepense*, and without ulterior motive. If the Duke, there seemed no reason to take the Chancellor's remarks too seriously. The latter wrote on September 3, that Fox had omitted the earlier part of the conversation, and that this gave a very different turn to the matter. Both Fox and Stone were speaking from hearsay, but were in all probability each convinced that their own version was the most correct.

To the dispassionate observer, it seems unlikely that Hardwicke would have cared at this moment wantonly to incite fresh intrigues. Fox was engaged to refrain from opposition, and the situation was tranquil, at least upon the surface.

Fox was soon told of what had occurred. Having salved his conscience by his refusal in March, he was quite ready to snatch at any fresh opening to better his position. Hartington was called in to negotiate; and Fox himself had several other long interviews with Stone, who had been primed beforehand by Hardwicke. A hint was given that any suggestion "proposed with the weight and approbation" of the Duke of Devonshire, would be very seriously considered by all parties concerned.<sup>1</sup> A meeting was arranged, therefore, between Hartington and the Lord Chancellor, upon which Fox set great store. It took place on July 26 or 27.

"I think this visit of your Lordship's to Lord Chancellor's will in a great measure determine the event, for which reason I beg your Lordship will let it be by appointment, to make it seem more serious, that it may not be interrupted, and that it may be more difficult to shuffle off the matter.

"As H.R.H.s, your father and your Lordship all agree that some apprehension brought it on, it may not be amiss

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, July 18, 1754 (Devonshire MSS.).



to say you wish it to keep me from opposition, which, let me intend what I will, my temper, out of humour with persons as I must be, will, you may say you know, carry me into. And when once in, I own I cannot stop. I think there can be no harm in saying, that this, if nothing is done, will have made it worse; and that you wish, if that is to be the case, it never had been mentioned, and particularly not to the D. of Devon. and yr Lordship.

"The more you speak in the D. of Devon.'s name the better, because one don't know where it stops. If with the Chancellor, nothing is so likely to remove an obstacle there, as his finding yr father thinks his Lordsp engaged to his Grace to think of and try something.

"If Pitt and Legge are again mentioned, it is obvious that this is not so much to them, as what was proposed and done in March without ever starting such difficulty.

"If Stone has any sincerity and much weight with the D. of Newcastle, the result of this conversation will be asking your Lordship to think of something. In that case your Lordship, I fancy, will think it right to open nothing, but say you will acquaint yr father and me with it, and you may (it will not be amiss) assure him that I will insist on nothing more than the D. of Devon. and you think reasonable; and that you will not be unreasonable, or aim at anything for me that can create any future discourse about confidence and power."<sup>1</sup>

That the result did not respond to expectations can be gleaned from Fox's remarks in a letter to Lady Hervey, complaining of the want of veracity in the human race:<sup>2</sup> "I have within these three months, and indeed within these three weeks, seen such unaccountable behaviour, as makes me very sure that people must be taken as they are." He felt that he had been fooled again, and his annoyance found expression in a letter to Waldegrave on the day of his last interview with Stone.<sup>3</sup> "Nothing can be more contemptuous than the usage I receive. I am to suppose Ld Ch. more the cause of it than anybody,

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, July 20, 1754 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> August 20, 1754.

<sup>3</sup> August 29.

and indeed I do. His Lordship meant nothing—nothing is meant now. *Strange things* (his words) prevented Stone's coming sooner."

Fox was meanwhile cultivating the society of Lady Yarmouth. He had invoked her assistance in the hopes of eradicating the feeling which still lurked in the King's mind, that he was "Un ambitieux qui demandoit des conditions bien fortes."<sup>1</sup> He consulted her as to whether His Majesty should be told of this latest development, and spoke openly of his situation. These confidences seem to have been to some extent misplaced; for the lady was in the habit of passing on much of her secret information to Munchausen, the Hanoverian envoy; and the latter was dubbed by Newcastle "their best friend," in a letter to Hardwicke. He told them everything, and his Grace thought that Lady Yarmouth knew that he did so.<sup>2</sup> To her aid, however, were due the strides which Fox was certainly making at this time in the King's estimation.

Besides his apprehension of these mysterious intrigues, Newcastle had to face the insolence of his own Chancellor of the Exchequer. Legge had tired under his Grace's studied contempt, and found means of getting even with him. He drove him to frenzy in July by an allusion to Murray, the only man of weight on whom Newcastle now depended in the Commons, calling him, "the Tory head of a Whig body." His Grace believed that Legge and Fox were in league. He suspected that the former's sudden access of Whiggism and the latter's "outward reconciliation" were part of the plot. Murray's character was to be blackened, and Fox, "the hero of the Whigs," would then squeeze himself into confidence, by standing forth in his defence.

All this was probably a phantom of his brain. But worse was yet to follow. At the end of September, Legge

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, September 13, 1754 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 1, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,736).

announced a proposal, so startling, that Newcastle could hardly believe his senses. He suggested that the leader of the Lower House should be given direct access to the King, without reference to any other ministers, though nominally subordinate to them.<sup>1</sup> The audacity of the scheme assured its defeat. A weighty alteration of the Constitution was clearly involved: for the first Lord of the Treasury might be reduced to the position of a mere cipher in his own Cabinet. Yet even the less impressionable Hardwicke was disturbed. He advised his colleague to speak of it to as few as possible, for fear he might "propagate the doctrine."

The incident confirmed Newcastle's worst fears. "Thus the great secret is out. The three great men, Fox, Pitt and Legge, have agreed upon the principle that there must be a minister in the House of Commons, and the first two or perhaps all three have a chance for it." He still hoped to retain his power uncurtailed. To do so, the functions of the leadership must be divided. Robinson, though unwilling to take the whole responsibility upon him, might "give the House the necessary informations": Legge would deal with finance; the Secretary-at-War and the Paymaster too must play their part. But upon the willingness of the parties concerned to carry out their allotted duties, the King threw shrewd doubts, when the plan was laid before him.

In reality everything was pointing to the necessity of a single leader. Under Lady Yarmouth's able tuition this had become the accepted view of the court. Murray was emphatic that it must be so. "It is necessary where different colours may fly by surprize, that there should be a standard which may be followed by the eye; a short signal will catch willing ears. That person, for 10,000 reasons, can only be the man your Grace mentions."<sup>2</sup> Granville was of the same opinion. "They must *gain*

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,736).

<sup>2</sup> Murray to Newcastle, October 6, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737).

Fox. They must not think of keeping him under in the H. of Commons; they can't keep him under. Mix liquors together, and the spirit will be uppermost." <sup>1</sup>

Hardwicke also agreed that Fox was the man, for the King had objections to all others. Yet he looked upon the appointment as the end of Newcastle's "chief power as Minister of the country," and openly warned him of his belief. The First Lord himself had no illusions on the subject. Fox had told Lady Yarmouth that he wanted *little*. "But ev'ry day produces some proof that this *little* means a good deal, and if granted may end in the whole, or an attempt for it." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady C. Fox, December 17, 1754.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754.



## CHAPTER XI

THE occurrences of the spring had been the means of drawing Fox closer to Pitt. The Secretary-at-War had signified his willingness to serve with, and even under him.<sup>1</sup> The latter, on his side, had told Newcastle to his face, during a visit to London in the month of June, that he considered that Fox should have been at the head of the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup> Their mutual discontent, Walpole says, led them to an explanation.

Pitt was under obligation to Newcastle for his seat in Parliament, as member for Aldborough, a diminutive borough in Yorkshire. But this consideration was outweighed by the slights which he felt had been laid upon him. He was longing for vengeance, and combination with Fox augured summary retribution. Dodington told Lord Hillsborough early in October, that the two men were so far agreed that Fox should take the Treasury, Pitt the Secretaryship of State, but that neither would assist the other. The existence of a compact of this far-reaching nature needs corroboration. But it is clear that their jealousies, formerly fomented and kept alive by Pelham, were waning. An alliance was foreshadowed, which would sound the death-knell of Newcastle's power.

Fortuitous influences were also at hand to ensure more cordial relations between the Paymaster and the Cumberland Whigs. In August, Fox had written by the Duke's command to remind Pitt of the interest which he had already shown in the deplorable condition of the

<sup>1</sup> Sir G. Lyttelton to Hardwicke, March 23, 1754 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 210).

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 340.

out-pensioners of Chelsea Hospital.<sup>1</sup> These invalid soldiers were not entitled, according to the regulations, to any cash instalment during their first year upon the list. Hence they had recourse to usurers, whose exactions speedily engulfed the whole of their pensions. In accordance with this request, Pitt took the matter in hand, and produced a remedial bill, which was hurried without opposition through both Houses at the commencement of the session.

He also showed himself to be in agreement with Cumberland's schemes for the defence of the American Colonies. In that quarter those war-clouds which had long threatened England hung thickest.

The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had left the boundaries of the respective territories of France and England in America undefined. Commissioners had been appointed to deal with the frontiers of Nova Scotia, or Acadia, as the sparsely populated district lying south of the St Lawrence river was then known. But no satisfactory settlement could be arranged. In the interior the atmosphere was even more heavily loaded. The French, claiming the region lying west of the Alleghany mountains, sought to hem the British colonists into a narrow seaboard. By means of a chain of forts on the Ohio river, where English settlements were already in existence, they schemed to link up their northern possessions with those in Louisiana, on the Gulf of Mexico. Hostilities had broken out all along this valley, and in 1754 a series of skirmishes had taken place, culminating in the surrender of a force of 400 militia, under the celebrated George Washington, then a young man of twenty-two.

The difficulty of ensuring adequate means of defence against the incursions of the French and their Indian allies was enhanced by a want of cohesion between the various Colonies. There was no organisation for the preparation of a common scheme; no machinery for the

<sup>1</sup> *Chatham Corres.*, i. 110.

accumulation of a general fund. It is true that Bedford, when Secretary of State, had done his utmost to initiate a specific system of defence: but his efforts received scant acknowledgment on either side of the Atlantic. Little enthusiasm could be excited in the provinces of the coast for the troubles of their more western neighbours. Even the provincial assemblies most concerned, ever at loggerheads with their respective governors, had been unwilling to provide supplies or authorise enlistment sufficient to repel the foe.

But at last the capitulation of Washington's force, in July, upon the borders of Virginia, brought home the danger of the situation to the colonists, many of whom had refused even to believe in the presence of the French. The Government at home, who had been languidly surveying the situation during the summer, were also spurred to immediate action. The question of some combined scheme for union between the Colonies had been discussed by the Cabinet in June. It was prepared by the Board of Trade, but only reached the Secretary of State in September, when more active measures had become imperative. In response to repeated appeals for stores and ammunition from Governor Dinwiddie, of Virginia, some assistance in arms and specie had been despatched in July. But an order to transport certain American companies of troops from the West Indies to the mainland created a fracas in ministerial circles. Fox had thought himself aggrieved by Holderness's omission to acquaint him with the dispatch, and complained to the King of the slight with heat.

Upon the receipt of the bad news, early in September, two regiments of foot upon the Irish establishment were warned for service. They were to embark at once, and be raised to war strength by enlistment in America.<sup>1</sup> By this step, Newcastle hoped, for the moment, to allay

<sup>1</sup> Each was finally made up at home to 500 privates, owing to the doubt whether suitable men would be found available in the Colonies.

public excitement. He excluded the Commander-in-Chief as long as possible from his counsels. Hardwicke and Holderness were alone admitted. To mask economy and a minimum of activity under the semblance of great preparations, was the length and breadth of their joint policy. The triumvirate were agreed that it was "monstrous" that the Colonies could not look after themselves; but they shrank from the openly expressed desire of Granville, who concurred in other respects with their views, for a strong American army. A vigorous campaign might result in open war with France—an issue doubly unwelcome in view of the coming difficulties of the session.

Other members of the Cabinet, however, looked differently upon the situation. Murray was eager for bold measures; and to his persistence the decision to send out a Commander-in-Chief from England was perhaps due. Cumberland was consulted upon this appointment,<sup>1</sup> which was given to his nominee, General Braddock, and henceforward took a leading part in ministerial deliberations upon the enterprise.

The Duke was summoned to a conference with certain of the ministers on September 26. Schooled in the maxims of continental warfare, and ignorant of the different conditions which prevailed in America, he expressed himself in favour of reliance upon the regular troops already detailed. Granville, however, objected to the immediate despatch of these two regiments, and proposed instead that a force of 5,000 or 6,000 colonials should be enlisted for service in the spring.<sup>2</sup> It was decided to take a middle course, and to supplement the regulars with two regiments to be raised on the spot. The suggestion was approved by the King, who was as anxious as any one for a definite line of action. Fox received personal instructions from His Majesty on Sep-

<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Robinson to Newcastle, September 15, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,736).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754 (*ibid.*)



tember 29, and had an interview with Robinson on the same subject. "Everything passed very cordially. I made no difficulty about giving him the four draughts, enclosed above; to which he had no objection, and seemed pleased with this kind of confidence, saying, it facilitated affairs, and which would, he said, have hindered several misunderstandings and delays in business."<sup>1</sup> But the fate of the two proposed colonial regiments still trembled in the balance. Newcastle had secretly obtained the King's sanction to let the matter drop, when a chance visit from Pitt caused him to stay his hand.<sup>2</sup> In response to an interrogation, the Paymaster expressed his views on the situation in America with unexpected firmness. He thought that the scheme should be supported at all risks. Cumberland's plan did not go far enough; add to it Granville's suggestions, and some notable success might be confidently anticipated.

Recognising the evident reluctance of Hardwicke and Newcastle to a strenuous campaign, the Cumberland party were now prepared to give them no loophole for escape. Fox was constantly in conference with the Duke; but we have unfortunately no means of judging their respective share in the initiation of the coercive measures during the next few weeks. The Secretary-at-War, to outward appearance at least, was supplying the motive power.

The first step was to thwart Newcastle's intention of dividing the expedition and postponing part until the spring. Fox treated the scheme as a whole, in a long list of requirements sent to Newcastle on October 6. The latter supposed this was by order; but was staggered by the further announcement that Fox was to see the King on the morrow in order to get his signature to the warrants

<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Robinson to Newcastle; also H. Fox to Sir T. Robinson, September 29, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,736).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 2, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737). Pitt had called on Newcastle to consult him on the question of the Chelsea pensioners.

for the new regiments. Next, a proclamation appeared in the *Gazette* of the 8th, emanating from the Secretary of State ; although it had been specially arranged at the conference that the preparations should be kept as secret as possible. In it instructions were issued to officers appointed to command regiments in America, "to repair forthwith to their posts." The War Office was taking its own line with a vengeance !

Newcastle hurriedly sought an audience with the King, and complained that this untoward haste must cause grave confusion. His Majesty thereupon confessed the surprise which he had felt when the Secretary-at-War brought the orders for the colonial regiments. "He told me it was to be so ; and what could I do ?" He assented to his Minister's request that the operation of the warrants should be suspended until Fox had satisfactorily explained his conduct.<sup>1</sup>

But once in his stride Fox was not easily checked. He was satisfied with his preparations, and prided himself that he had done everything in his power "towards economy." He calculated that the appointment of half-pay officers to the new regiments would decrease expenditure. By the selection of Pitcher, a retired officer "who had been in America before, and was of an exceeding good character," as deputy-commissary of the musters, he considered that the public would be safeguarded from payment for ineffectives.<sup>2</sup> His proposal to date the establishments from September 24, was, however, open to misconstruction. Certainly Newcastle's was a more reasonable suggestion, that their commencement should be coincident with the first actual enlistments.<sup>3</sup> Fox continued buried in a mass of detail regarding clothing, medicines and accoutrements. A hospital, "an expensive but necessary article," was to be despatched at once.

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, October 6, 1754 (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12.

Yet Anson, at the Admiralty, openly expressed doubts of the adequacy of the arrangements for provisioning the troops. Fox had told him, on October 11, that Cumberland refused to recognise the necessity of a regular contract, and considered that the wants of the force could be easily satisfied on the spot by the quartermaster.<sup>1</sup> Anson thought that some beef, at least, should be forwarded from Ireland in case of emergency. This suggestion was acted upon; but on the whole his remonstrances seemed to carry little weight.

On October 12, Fox was summoned before the Cabinet to account for his actions. "Everything was extremely civil" at the meeting. "Mr Fox never mentioned any one order being given (except that for the transport of corporals and sergeants out of the Guards, which, His Majesty said, was without his knowledge or order, and had consequently refus'd to agree to it)."<sup>2</sup> Yet the snub had no lasting effect on the Secretary-at-War's impetuosity. He knew that he had the King's secret approval, and recognised that His Majesty's compliance with Newcastle's protests was solely a temporary setback. "I think I see a coldness, a reservation in the closet, almost ever since the N. American affair came on, except the one day that Mr Fox's orders were suspended," wrote Newcastle to Hardwicke, on October 21<sup>3</sup>; for he was not deceiving himself with false hopes. Transports were collected for immediate despatch, without the Treasury sanction; and notwithstanding Fox's agreement with Anson that Pitcher should not leave until the arrival from Flanders of Sir John Sinclair, the quartermaster-general who had been selected, the commissary received orders, on October 25, to seek out the captain of his ship

<sup>1</sup> Anson to Newcastle, October 11, 12, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12. Cumberland had set his heart upon this project; but the King could not be induced to change his mind.

<sup>3</sup> Add. MSS. 35,414.

with a view to instant departure.<sup>1</sup> Robinson's office had barely time to provide the documents and letters which were to be entrusted to his charge.

Fox's continual conferences with Pitt were a further source of anxiety to Newcastle and his adviser. "In time fire and water may agree," wrote the latter: these meetings seemed "remarkable" to say the very least. Every day was marking more clearly the slenderness of the thread upon which his Grace's authority hung; and yet in his preparations for the session he seemed to take no trouble to strengthen it. His omission of the Secretary-at-War from the number of the guests at his official dinner was an act of pettiness, which Hardwicke considered distinctly injudicious.<sup>2</sup> We read therefore with some surprise Walpole's remark, that, as "the Duke of Newcastle had secured by employments almost every material speaker in Parliament," it was hoped the session would pass off well.

Yet in truth it was from his own Ministry that his Grace had most to fear. For now, to make bad worse, Legge had recommenced his intrigues. It seems that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the weakness and despondency of his nature, was becoming more and more alarmed at his isolation as the day of battle drew near. He feared the thunder of Pitt's eloquence, and was "frightened out of his wits" at the thought of having to cope with Fox in debate. He spoke to Robinson of "his own inability, especially to *reply*, pointing out Fox as able and *terrible*." "Yet he will do his best, but at last was for making Pitt Secretary of State and having Fox in the Treasury."<sup>3</sup> To urge their claims might be the means of turning away wrath and of deflecting their unwelcome attentions in the House of Commons. Legge was fully conscious of his limitations, and though vain

<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Robinson to Newcastle, October 11, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737).

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 3, 1754 (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 21, 1754 (Add. MSS. 35,414).



and ambitious had the sense to prefer not to be pushed "higher than his wings could reach."<sup>1</sup> He even repented of having shown too bold a front in his speech in support of the Government on the address, and took the opportunity of a congratulatory visit from Newcastle, to speak once more, "as from himself only," of the two stalwarts. On this occasion, he professed to have had discourse with Pitt, who, he said, was now willing to waive the Secretaryship, but would take an active part, "if the King would take notice of him and he was treated with confidence." As to Fox, he *must* be Secretary of State. Newcastle objected that the King would certainly refuse to remove Robinson; but in answer to this Legge suggested that something else might be found for Holderness, and that Robinson could equally hold his present post in the Upper House. Newcastle replied, that it was too great and too difficult a thing for him to discuss. And thus the matter ended, leaving him confirmed in his suspicions that Legge was "linked against him."<sup>2</sup>

The opening debate of the session, which commenced on November 14, passed off peacefully. Pitt was present, and introduced his bill for the Chelsea pensioners. He then hurried away to cement his friendship with the Grenvilles by marriage with their sister, Hester. The ceremony took place in London on November 16; but by the 25th Pitt was back in his place in the House of Commons. That day was to sweep away any lingering doubts from Newcastle's mind of the future attitude of the two aspirants for promotion. The absurdity of expecting Robinson to exercise the least control over the Commons under existing conditions was proved to the full. "Newcastle might as well send his jackboot to lead us," Pitt had said to Fox<sup>3</sup>; and the truth of the remark was exemplified on the very first occasion.

<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Robinson to Newcastle, November 16, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 17, 1754 (Add. MSS. 35,414).

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 101.

The House had settled down to the discussion of various petitions arising out of the general election. On the date in question, that from Berwick-upon-Tweed was under consideration. The younger Delaval, the sitting member, had been opposed by John Wilkes, whose name is more closely connected with the succeeding reign. Charges of bribery had been preferred, and a ribald speech from Delaval in his own defence had excited the members present to the highest pitch of merriment. For this outburst they were sternly rebuked by Pitt. Descending from the gallery, he descanted on the enormity of organised corruption and the loss of dignity to the Commons in treating it so lightly. Legge alone, of the ministers, had the courage to reply; nor did he venture to disagree. The speech is described by Fox, who entered the House as he was finishing, as "the finest that Pitt ever spoke and the most remarkable."<sup>1</sup> Its importance lies in his open declaration of war against Newcastle in his warning to the House that they might "degenerate into a little assembly, serving no other purpose than to register the arbitrary edicts of *one* too powerful *subject*."

Yet more was to follow. Upon a motion, in the evening, to fix a date for the hearing of the Colchester petition, Sir Thomas Robinson alluded to that from Reading, which preceded it, as in all probability "a short cause, and on the side of the sitting member a poor cause." Pitt had chanced to take Lord Fane, the successful candidate, a brother-in-law of Lord Sandwich, under his wing. He "handled" the Secretary of State "roughly," for thus presuming to forejudge the case. He made it clear, however, that he aimed at higher game; for he remarked that he thought Robinson "as able as any man that had of late years filled that office, or was likely to

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, November 26, 1754 (Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 146). The other authorities for the debates on this day are: Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 353; J. Calcraft to Digby, November 26, 1754 (*Hist. MSS. Comm.* viii. App. p. 225). See also Appendix B.

fill it." Fox, on this occasion, joined in the fray, ostensibly in the Secretary of State's defence. "I expressed great regard for Lord Fane; and excused Sir Thomas Robinson's irregular and blameable expression, by his twenty years' residence abroad, where he had done honour to himself and his country, and which easily accounted for his total inexperience in the matters now before us." "He did not like it"; nor had Fox intended that he should. The general feeling of the House, packed as it was with Newcastle's adherents, was more in sympathy with Robinson than with Pitt and Fox. Yet the latter calculated that in a bare fortnight they had already reached a point, to which he hardly thought a whole session would have brought them.<sup>1</sup>

The debate on the Army Estimates, two days later, gave Pitt an opportunity of closing with a fresh antagonist. Murray, recently raised to the post of Attorney-General, was reported, as we have seen, to have sympathised in his youth with the Jacobites, and was therefore an easy target for Pitt's envenomed shafts. The younger Beckford brought forward the stereotyped motion for a reduction, but received no support except from his namesake. Fox replied, "very short, and without going in the least from the purpose."<sup>2</sup> He instanced, as a proof of the good behaviour of the soldiery, upon which Beckford had cast doubts, "that in the eight years that he had been Secretary-at-War, he had not received three complaints in a year, not even from inn-keepers." Lord Barrington and Nugent supported him, but the latter fawned on Newcastle with adulatory phrases. Jacobitism had ceased to exist, he said, throughout the realm; but some, brought up in those tenets, had belied their teaching. He introduced as a simile, the surprise of a hen who saw her duckling foster-children take to the water for the first

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, November 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, November 28, 1754 (Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 150). Compare Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 356.

time as readily as if she had taught them to do so. Pitt took advantage of this opening. He likened Oxford to that domestic fowl, and asked leave from his own experience to doubt whether the disloyal sentiments originated in the colleges of the University would be easily forgotten. "Every word was *Murray*," Pitt's contemporary at that seat of learning, wrote Fox, who sat next him during the debate; adding, that he "suffered for an hour."

It was now more apparent than ever to Newcastle and his confidant Hardwicke that their plans for the session had failed. To carry on the business of the Commons without a definite leader was clearly impossible. Their hope of keeping Pitt and Fox apart seemed equally delusive. Pitt's mistrust of Fox, as Cumberland's man, which had once led him to confide to the First Lord that he would never unite with him, was as strong as ever. But he had fathomed the insincerity of Newcastle's professions towards him in the spring; and the recent discovery of his Grace's schemes to create discord was a material encouragement to counterscheme. There was no ambiguity now in his reply to Hardwicke's question whether he could bear to act under Fox: "My Lord, leave out *under*; it will never be a word between us: Mr Fox and I shall never quarrel."<sup>1</sup>

If Newcastle was to carry on his Government, therefore, some new plan must be evolved, and that speedily. To pretend that a *rapprochement* with Egmont and the Tory party could spell success, was ludicrous. The alternative of dismissing one or both of the rebels had evidently been considered and for the moment rejected.<sup>2</sup> An accommodation with one or other was the only practicable solution of the difficulty. Of the two, Newcastle would have preferred, in his heart of hearts, to give office to Pitt, with

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle spoke of "two removals," to Hardwicke on November 28 (Add. MSS. 35,414), but thought it wise to wait until their vacancies could be filled.



all his arrogance and all his eccentricities. To do so would have salved his conscience of innumerable promises, neglected or ignored. It would have gratified the mistress of Leicester House, whose good-will he had, of late, been laying himself out to cultivate. But a recent interview, about the time of the opening of the session, had shown Pitt's attitude in a most unpromising light. "Fewer words, if you please, my Lord," he had replied to Newcastle's civilities, "for your words have long lost all weight with me." And besides, the barrier of the King's ill-will remained. In George's eyes Pitt's case was one more for removal than for promotion.

It was otherwise with Fox. We have already observed that he had recently made great progress in the King's estimation. He had the recommendation of Cumberland and Lady Yarmouth to back his pretensions; and the fact that he had refused secret advances from Frederick, Prince of Wales, and made "no merit of it," was an "obligation" which had not escaped the King's memory.<sup>1</sup> The task of satisfying his aspirations seemed to Newcastle and his adviser less arduous than that of securing Pitt. They believed that he would be enticed to their side by offers which the other would have disdained to consider; and Fox, once shackled, would prove infinitely more dependable than would Pitt, with his varying moods and lack of health. And so, to use Waldegrave's words, "Fox was first applied to, as being thought more practicable, less disagreeable to the King, and more a man of business."

It was generally believed at the end of November that Pitt would receive his dismissal.<sup>2</sup> But Newcastle realised that this course might drive him into open opposition, and would seriously jeopardise negotiations with Fox,

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Bath said that the suggestion reminded him of a story of the Gunpowder Plot. "The Lord Chamberlain was sent to examine the vaults under the Parliament House, and, returning with his report, said he had found five-and-twenty barrels of gunpowder, that he had removed ten of them, and hoped the other fifteen would do no harm."

whose fear was very real that overtures to himself might include the offer of Pitt's place. The possibility raised visions of complications which would add materially to his difficulties. He resolutely took steps to contradict rumours which might in any way connect his name with a possible vacancy at the Pay Office. He even contemplated the likelihood of being turned out, in consequence of a refusal to accept that post.<sup>1</sup> Fox and Pitt were in frequent communication, and on November 27 were closeted together for two hours. "A difficult conversation; I managed it, I think, as well as such a conversation could be managed. . . . The result of this is, and of every other shall be, that I will be as prudent as I can be with honour ; but no suspicion, I promise your Lordship, shall be fixed on honour, though it should be necessary to depart from all prudence to preserve it."<sup>2</sup> It is easy to comprehend the delicacy of the situation, when we remember that the bond which connected them savoured far more of an armed truce than of a cordial alliance.

Fox was fully aware that he could expect overtures to be made at any moment. The doubt was, the form in which they would be presented. Cumberland wrote on November 27 :

" If Lord Hartington was well informed, Pitt will be dismissed with his whole tribe and some offer will be made you. What that offer will be, all turns upon ; and in my opinion your conduct at present is more critical than when Mr Pelham died.

" What may be proper for you to accept, I don't know, but certainly they must come to you ; and till they do come, I would remain in that present quietude you now profess.

" If you should have improper offer from the Duke of Newcastle, I hope you'll desire to give your answer to the King yourself, and, without mentioning what is pass'd,

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady C. Fox, December 2, 1754.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, November 28, 1754 (*Waldegrave's Memoirs*, p. 153).

repeat your promises of not opposing and declining the offers, as they would not enable you to remedy the disorders now risen in the House of Commons."

But the actual opening was to come from the King himself, primed, however, by Newcastle in the line he was to take.<sup>1</sup> Fox was summoned to his presence on December 2. "The King offer'd nothing, talked to me long, and it ended in bidding me send Lord Waldegrave to the D. of Newcastle, and afterwards going with Lord Waldegrave myself with my thoughts and intentions. . . . Neither the King nor I mentioned any terms." <sup>2</sup> The result of the interview was a relief to Fox's mind. He had written in the morning to his wife, that he was "in a disagreeable way." "I am to go to court where the Duke thinks I am to be offer'd Paymaster in Pitt's room, with Cabinet Counsellor and the direction of the H. of Commons." He would feel freer to negotiate through the medium of his friend, Lord Waldegrave, and the risk of awkward proposals would be minimised.

The task which Waldegrave had undertaken required infinite tact and patience. The principals were persuaded by him to defer their meeting "till they had settled preliminaries, and clearly understood each other's meaning." Even then a complication arose at the very outset. Fox appears to have laid down in his first conversation with Waldegrave that the King intended him to be leader

<sup>1</sup> A paper entitled "Memo. for the King," and dated "November," is preserved in the Newcastle Correspondence (Add. MSS. 32,995). The headings foreshadow the points actually raised by the King in his conversation with Fox. See Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 361, and Appendix C. The King should show dislike to Fox's "behaviour and connection." He should demonstrate the danger of persistence; and hint that an alteration in his conduct would gain his favour. Fox should not be given "the advantage of knowing the King's intention as to Mr Pitt."

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Lady C. Fox. This and the previous note sent to Holland House bear no date except "Monday, dinner," "Monday morning." Walpole speaks of November 29, but the interview clearly took place on Monday, December 2, the date mentioned by M. Boutet to Rouillé in a letter of December 5 (Archives des Aff. Etr. Angleterre. t. 437).

of the House of Commons. The assumption is not borne out by his letter to his wife, nor by one to Pitt.<sup>1</sup> Yet he had certainly given a hint to the King that some "appearance" of real power would be necessary, while owning that above all he would like to be Secretary of State for War. But his Grace had no intention of going as far as this. He hurried, without loss of time, to the King, who disavowed any such purpose and told Waldegrave on the morrow that it was time Fox "should explain himself in the clearest manner, both as to what he expected and as to the part he intended to act. . . . He would have him give his answer in writing."<sup>2</sup>

Fox's message to Newcastle, delivered by Waldegrave on December 3, was to the effect that he was "ready and willing to act with him and under him; but that to enable him to do what the King seemed to expect, it would be necessary that Mr Fox should have some mark of confidence."<sup>3</sup> Lord Waldegrave hinted that, "an employment of £1,500 a year more than his present office would be of little use to Fox for that purpose." Probably the Pay Office was here referred to; and Waldegrave went on to make it clear that he felt sure that Fox would refuse any such offer. He would certainly like to see his post turned into a third Secretaryship of State.

Newcastle's reply was a model of obscurity. "The King's intention was that Mr Fox should support the King's measures and ministers. And upon Mr Fox so doing, that he should be treated with regard and confidence from the King's servants, and with grace and favour from His Majesty." We have Waldegrave's own account of its reception. After his interview with the King on the 4th, he went straight to Fox, to lay the King's remarks and Newcastle's answer before him. "He

<sup>1</sup> *Chatham Corres.*, i. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Waldegrave to Newcastle, December 4, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737).

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle's notes of Waldegrave's conversation on December 3 and proposed reply (Add. MSS. 32,995).



seemed at first surprized, but recollecting himself said that he should obey His Majy's commands with the greatest submission and readiness, and would explain himself in writing in the clearest manner he was able."

Fox now consulted his friends as to what requests he should consign to paper. Waldegrave had warned him that it was useless to refer further to the leadership. That was already a closed book. He also advised him to be moderate in his demands, assuring him that the King was less anxious than Newcastle himself to make him minister. On February 5, Fox laid the whole situation before Pitt, in a long letter : and a meeting was arranged for that evening.<sup>1</sup> He stated openly the suggestions which had been made to him regarding the Paymastership ; and alluded to the only two courses which seemed open to him—either to tell the King that, without the lead, he was powerless to do more than he was doing at present, or, in conformity with a hint dropped by Newcastle, to assume the duties of leader without official recognition of his position. It is not clear from what source the further proposal emanated, that Fox should ask for a seat in the Cabinet. This seems to have been discussed during the conversation between him and Pitt, and could not possibly be termed an unreasonable demand. It had the entire support of the Duke of Marlborough, one of those to whom Fox had turned for advice.

On these lines he composed a letter to the King, and submitted it for approval to Cumberland and Pitt. The Duke was more doubtful of the expediency of the request for a mark of the King's favour, and feared that Fox might

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to W. Pitt, "December 5, 1754" (*Chatham Corres.*, i. 124). The correctness of the view taken by Mr Riker (*Henry Fox*), that this correspondence between Fox and Pitt in the first-named work is misdated, can be amply proved from the Holland House MSS.

By referring to the dates of various letters in that collection, No. 1 (*Chatham Corres.*, i. 124) can be allotted to December 5 ; No. 2, December 6 ; No. 3 (the letter to the King), December 10 ; Nos. 4, 5, 6, December 6 ; No. 7, December 12. The subsequent memorandum is probably correctly assigned to April 1755.

lay himself open to the charge of faithlessness, should he fail in some future debate to defend Newcastle against Pitt's attacks.<sup>1</sup> He withdrew his objections, however, on the understanding that Fox should make clear that he would not directly oppose Pitt, and that the words, "*in the present state of the House of Commons,*" should be inserted in the letter. His advice was to make no actual mention of a place in the Cabinet. "His Majesty will probably have heard the words 'Cabinet Councillor' before he sees the paper, and cannot possibly mistake."

Pitt had also some alterations to propose, and disagreed with Cumberland's addition, which he considered might lead to constructions unfavourable to them both. Fox replied that he was unable to recognise the force of his arguments. For himself, he was satisfied; but would write as Pitt might alter the expression, "if he still thought his delicacy affected." He said that he would take all responsibility with the King, "because on no consideration will I venture on this weak scheme, unless strengthened by your acquiescence in it; nor, were it a strong and secure one, with the least appearance against me (and I think it would be great); or with the feeling I should have, if I accepted a favour now, when you were to receive, and perhaps in their opinion they were enabled to give you, an affront."<sup>2</sup>

These *pourparlers* took time, and the letter was not presented to the King by Lord Waldegrave until December 10:

"SIR, Infinitely thankful for your Majesty's command receiv'd by Lord Waldegrave to explain myself in writing, I must begin with humbly asking pardon for having mistaken your Majesty. I now understand your Majesty do's not intend to have any leader in the House of Commons, and I receive your Majesty's pleasure on this head with all that duty and submission that becomes me.

<sup>1</sup> See *Chatham Corres.*, i. 129.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to W. Pitt (*Chatham Corres.*, i. 131).

“What your Majesty requires, I understand, is, that on all occasions, as well not relative as relative to the army, I should act with spirit in support of your Majesty’s service in the H. of Commons; and your Majesty bids me put in writing what will enable me to obey these yr commands.

“Thinking then no more of taking the lead, but of obeying your Majesty’s commands only, I answer, that, in the present state of the H. of Commons, I desire no change of employment, no pecuniary advantage, but some such mark of your Majesty’s favour as may enable me to speak like one well inform’d and honour’d with your Majesty’s confidence in regard to the matters I may be speaking of. This then, Sir, is what I desire, and can desire for no other purpose than to enable me to attempt what you command, confining myself to your Majesty’s own views, and to the very manner your Majesty shall command me to pursue them in.

“I am, &c., &c., &c.”<sup>1</sup>

In sending it to Waldegrave, Fox added a private note :

“Begin, if you please, my Lord, with repeating my solemn assurance of not being in any engagement. Indeed it is true. The only request, not express’d in the paper, is to be excus’d accepting P.’s place. I will defend H.M.’s measures at all events, as express’d this morning. But being from inactivity to become active, I humbly beg that H.M.’s favour and command, and no pecuniary advantage, may appear, as it really is, the motive. And if anything less than Cab. Council can be found as an excuse for my altering my conduct with regard to the ministers, let it be propos’d. I do not desire to know, much less to determine, what Mr Pitt is to do or be.”

Lord Waldegrave appears to have carried out these instructions satisfactorily in his interview with the King. He told him, “that if Fox answered Pitt, it should always be in defence of the measures, but with particular civility.” Also, that Fox was perfectly willing to act under Robin-

<sup>1</sup> The letter differs somewhat in its final shape from the original draft printed in *Chatham Corres.* (i. 128).



son. " 'For what is acting under *him*' ?" said Fox laughing. 'If there is a meeting of the Council, it will be his paper, his pens and his green table; if we both rise to speak, I will yield to him.' " <sup>1</sup>

Fox's letter was at once referred by the King to Newcastle, Granville and Hardwicke. The minute of their meeting bears out Waldegrave's criticism of Newcastle's conduct throughout the transaction: "He lost all the merit of every concession, by conferring his favours with a bad grace." <sup>2</sup> The moderation of Fox's demand was made an excuse for granting him as little as possible. They recommended an assurance, that he should "be constantly and early informed of all advices that may come from abroad, and all other matters that may in any way relate to the business of the House of Commons," as ample recompense for his compliance with the King's wishes. But in the event of His Majesty condescending to grant Fox's request, they hoped that he would be told that, "his advancement to the Cabinet Council was not intended by the King in the least to interfere with or derogate from the priority belonging to His Majesty's Secretary of State in the House of Commons, and that it was not His Majesty's intention to confer any power or confidence independent of such ministers as His Majesty should think fit to entrust with the conduct of his affairs." <sup>3</sup> As to Pitt, their advice was to do nothing for the present, "but to leave him under the uncertainty in which he now is."

The King was more lavish with his rewards on this occasion than were his ministers. Lord Waldegrave signified, two days later, the assent of His Majesty to Fox's veiled request to be admitted to the Cabinet, at the same time transmitting him a paper, which set out his future status in the House of Commons in the identical words of Newcastle's minute.

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 364.

<sup>2</sup> Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Powis House, December 10 (Add. MSS. 32,995).



On the day after the arrangements had been thus satisfactorily completed, Fox had his long-postponed interview with Newcastle. "As much, or rather as little, pass'd as was proper on such an occasion, and it went off as well as possible."<sup>1</sup> On December 15, he paid his respects to Hardwicke; and was encouraged by the reception he received from the King two days later to write to his wife, that he liked what he had done "much the better." Yet he could not disguise from his intimates a feeling of disappointment that his pocket was not profiting by his new dignity. The complaint recurs continually in his letters; but he sought consolation in the fact that he had taken the only honourable course. "I believe, friend, I might have had a place as much better than mine as this comes to, or perhaps that added to my own, if I would. But I would have no pecuniary advantage, lest it should be said that friend Fox was hir'd or brib'd."<sup>2</sup>

As the Secretary-at-War had now gained his long-desired promotion, let us examine what real benefits were thereby to accrue to him. By his admission to the Cabinet he had nominally a hand in the guidance of the ship of state. But as sole representative, for the moment, of the Cumberland party,<sup>3</sup> his voice could carry little weight. His new colleagues were either hostile, or were swayed by the tyranny of fear. His position in the House of Commons was ambiguous. Robinson, the man whom he laughed at and despised, was still his superior. He had no individual control, and could be called on to support measures which he condemned. His defence of ministers might at any moment bring him into conflict with his pseudo-ally, Pitt.

For this, he had lent his assistance to bolster up a despicable Administration. For this, he had neglected the advice

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady C. Fox, December 14, 1754.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to P. Collinson, December 22, 1754 (Add. MSS. 28,727).

<sup>3</sup> Granville can hardly, as yet, be termed one of that following.

of his friend and patron, Cumberland, who counselled him not to forsake Pitt. "I don't know him, but, by what you tell me, Pitt is what is scarce, he is a man." Had he but paused, Newcastle must, ere long, have fallen. Then Pitt and Fox would have taken their fill of power and revenge: for the former would have none of his Grace. He looked to a new Ministry, in which Newcastle would find no place.

Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that Fox was ready to accept any advancement which he considered was consistent with honour. A chance of promotion had slipped through his fingers before. He had made up his mind that the mistake should not occur again. Doubtless he calculated that he was obliging the King by smoothing over the complications which had arisen. A short step now might lead to a long one in the future. Yet above all other considerations, we can trace an invincible mistrust of Pitt through every stage in their relations. He seemed almost anxious not to work with him. Had he realised that their natures were too widely divergent to admit of lasting union? Had he guessed that their suspicions were mutual, and that Pitt's want of cordiality was not solely due to dislike of his connection with Cumberland? Had he already made up his mind to go his own way? The two men, to all appearance, were in absolute agreement during the negotiations. Fox had Pitt's approval of the course which he was taking; yet raised no finger to save him from dismissal. He was even secretly evading any endeavour to assist him. "I do not desire to know, much less to determine, what Mr Pitt is to do or be," he wrote to Waldegrave.<sup>1</sup> But all the while, to Pitt's face, he was maintaining an appearance of activity on his behalf. "Whether the determination is likely to be wise or foolish with regard to you," he wrote, "I have taken so much pains in vain to learn, that I conclude there is no determina-

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 237.

tion yet.”<sup>1</sup> We have also already recited similar professions.

It is impossible, therefore, to absolve Fox from the charge of a deliberate attempt to throw dust in Pitt's eyes. He had refused to supersede him as Paymaster, and had bargained to be allowed to oppose him with moderation, should the necessity arise. Yet the very stipulation proves the slenderness of the thread which connected them; and the conditions thus imposed proved in reality a useful weapon for the Lord Chancellor. It was turned, with good effect, against Fox himself, in conversation with His Majesty: for any tenderness towards Pitt could do him no good in the King's eyes.\* In all probability any effort, however strenuous, to elucidate the fate in store for his confederate would have failed; for we have seen that the ministers were determined not to take him into their confidence. But the fact cannot be disguised that Fox took little real pains to obtain the information which he pretended to be seeking so assiduously.

Waldegrave tells us that in his relations with his enemy Newcastle, Fox “behaved like a man of sense and a man of honour; very frank, very explicit and not very unreasonable.” Is it possible to say the same of his conduct to his own ally? True, he was doing nothing to damage Pitt's interests; but he was neglecting to further them, though clothed in the garb of an active partizan. Can this be the real explanation of the breach between the two men? Walpole relates that Fox, having obtained his dignity of Cabinet Councillor, “privately foreswore all connection with Pitt.”<sup>2</sup> Was it not rather his lukewarmness which was subsequently brought to Pitt's ears? This act of unfriendliness, magnified, perhaps, into something worse, may have well been the reason

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to W. Pitt, December 12, 1754 (*Chatham Corres.*, i. 132).

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 15, 1754 (Add. MSS. 32,737).

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 364.

for the latter's refusal to combine with Fox a few months later.

Be this as it may, Fox had made the most grievous mistake of his political career. To achieve a temporary success he had sacrificed his future prospects, when they seemed brightest. He ran the risk of severing his connection with the one man by whose assistance he might have reached the highest rung of the ladder of fame and greatness. For the moment, victory seemed within his grasp; but he had overrated his own importance. In combination with Pitt he might have risen to any height. Alone he could not stand. The unpopularity of his patron, Cumberland, had set in motion that wave of public opinion, which was to beat so wildly against him in later years. The world, regarding Fox as Orford's disciple, was prone to view his methods with suspicion. Pitt, on the other hand, had already acquired the reputation of incorruptibility, and his subsequent refusal to act with Fox seemed to turn suspicion into certainty.



## CHAPTER XII

AFTER the remarkable display of fireworks which had heralded the commencement of the session, there was little to disturb its peace. "Things go very quietly this session. Fox has evidently the lead there. Pitt, though very angry, rather hints than declares opposition, unwilling to lose his employment and at the same time unable to stifle his resentment. Legge is nobody, and consequently discontented, but silently so, in the hope of being Mr Pitt's successor next session." <sup>1</sup> Pitt, basking in the sunshine of his recent marriage, nursed in silence the recollection of his resentment, and brooded over past discontents. Upon the sole occasion when he and Fox met in debate, the latter shrank from the contest, and treated him with studied courtesy.

The business of the House of Commons continued to be chiefly confined to election petitions. In three of these Fox acknowledged a special interest. He seems to have succeeded in adjusting the differences at Reading of which he speaks in a letter to Lord Hartington: "I long and labour to make up Reading, which will cause much ill blood and fresh commotions, if heard." <sup>2</sup> He took little part in the debates upon the Oxfordshire election, although he shared responsibility with the Duke of Marlborough for putting forward the candidates who were finally successful.<sup>3</sup> His oratorical energies were reserved

<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield to S. Dayrolles, February 4, 1755 (*Letters of Lord Chesterfield*, iv. 146).

<sup>2</sup> January 4, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 352.

for the petition from Michell, or as it is more commonly known, St Michael, in Cornwall.

In this tiny borough, Lord Sandwich's interests had been threatened by two of Newcastle's nominees. By securing the returning officer the former was able to obtain the election of his members, one of whom was Robert Clive, already a noted figure in eastern climes.<sup>1</sup> A petition, however, was lodged, and the matter came before Parliament in February. Sandwich, though a follower of Cumberland, had managed to enlist the Lord Chancellor's sympathies, and was consequently proclaiming the suit a private affair. Unfortunately, Fox's intervention "threw the whole into a cause of faction."<sup>2</sup> The struggle became a legal dispute, and therefore one after the Secretary-at-War's own heart. He drew first blood; beating "four lawyers and Nugent" by 26 votes, on February 28.

Ultimate success was wrested from him by the Tories. That party in the first instance had promised their votes as each individual pleased. Seeing, however, that they held the balance between the combatants, they approached Newcastle with the proposal, that, if he would dismiss Pitt and Fox from office and sacrifice the Oxford election, they would give him their future support. This was to clothe the matter in a coat of spurious importance; and the First Lord very naturally declined to deprive himself of "the two ablest speakers in the House, with all their followers," in exchange for "about an hundred of the silentest and most impotent votes." Yet it is interesting to note the attitude of the Tories towards Fox, whose frequent attacks in Parliament they resented. Their overtures having failed, the Tory leaders next presented

<sup>1</sup> Fox seems to have made friends with Clive soon after the latter's return to England at the end of 1753, probably at the time when the extension of the jurisdiction of the Mutiny Act to the East Indies was under consideration. See *ante*, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 375.

the case at a party meeting, as a contest for power between Fox and Newcastle. A cleavage in their ranks ensued. Beckford preferred the former; Fazakerley the latter. United action being again nominally at an end, Sandwich triumphed on the last division in Committee by 17 votes. But on the Report stage the decision was reversed. A cabal was formed "in order to defeat Fox"<sup>1</sup>; and Tory votes, given regardless of previous engagements, secured the victory for Newcastle. Fox "spoke very well," and had the slight satisfaction of giving Sir George Lee "a fair set down, after all was over."<sup>2</sup>

Fox left no stone unturned to keep up the majority in the Commons. "I am greatly obliged to you," he wrote to Collinson, "for your good advice. But you are not rightly inform'd. Friend Pitt is as warm as I am, he is a much better speaker than I—that is the truth of it, I assure you. But tickling the palm, not the ear, is the business now, and he that can do the first is the best orator, let him speak ever so ill."<sup>3</sup> Several speeches from the lips of the Secretary-at-War are recorded during the session. He introduced the extension of the Mutiny Bill to America in December. His was the proposal, on January 29, that in order to discuss an urgent bill, the House should sit on January 30, a day set apart by statute as a church holiday in memory of King Charles's martyrdom. The Speaker refused to accept the suggestion; whereupon Fox moved to repeal the act. "The whole House was amazed at the motion, and he was obliged to make a motion to withdraw his former one. It was an ambition to please his Sovereign, but he fixed on the wrong method."<sup>4</sup>

A Scottish bill, which came before the House in February, was the occasion of two remarkable speeches from

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 377.

<sup>2</sup> R. Rigby to Bedford, March 24, 1755 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 157).

<sup>3</sup> January 25, 1755.

<sup>4</sup> Hamilton Gorges to B. Underwood (*Balfour MSS. Hist. MSS. Comm.* x. pt. vi.). Also Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 369.

Pitt, and of some complimentary remarks from Fox. The Government sought to continue in office the judges, or sheriffs-depute as they were called, at the pleasure of the Crown, in accordance with an ordinance passed in 1746, rather than to grant it to them for life. Fox gave the measure his support ; as did Murray. The arguments used on both sides in the course of the debate were confused and difficult to analyse. It is sufficient for our purpose to record eulogies on the cause of liberty from Pitt, who was opposed to the principles involved, and the dexterity of the Secretary-at-War in response. On the second reading, Fox announced that he was undetermined and spoke solely to show that the measure was not being "crammed down his throat." To his remark, that "he revered liberty and Pitt, because nobody could speak so well on its behalf," he added, in reply to a rebuke from the gentleman in question for levity in Committee, "that if he had honoured the fire of liberty, he now honoured the smoke."<sup>1</sup>

But though Newcastle had little to trouble him in Parliament, he had plenty to occupy his mind in the personnel of his Government, and in the lowering aspect of affairs abroad. In the rearrangements which took place at the time, the Cumberland party gained a lion's share. Lord Hartington was sent to Ireland to replace Dorset, whose system of partizan government had landed him in a hopeless *impasse*. The Duke of Marlborough became Lord Privy Seal upon old Lord Gower's death ; and the Duke of Rutland was made Lord Steward. There were also a number of minor vacancies to be dealt with at court. Newcastle could not even refrain from interference in the arrangements of the royal Bedchamber, and laid himself open to a hard rap over the knuckles. He objected to the King's desire to appoint Lord Rochfort Groom of the Stole, and was sharply told to confine himself to the Treasury. "The Duke of Newcastle meddles with

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 370, 378.



things he has nothing to do with," said His Majesty to Hardwicke, a few days later.<sup>1</sup> The First Lord was thunderstruck at the rebuff, which he put down to Fox's "objection" made to him "in the King's closet." He acknowledged his fear to the Chancellor that if it became known that he no longer had the King's ear for appointments, people would go elsewhere. And to whom but to Fox? He complained that all the favours which he had obtained for the Albemarle family were being ascribed to the Secretary-at-War's influence.<sup>2</sup> Neither Hardwicke nor Stone, whom Newcastle had also consulted, agreed with him that Fox was to blame in the matter; and though it seems unlikely that the latter would have let slip any opportunity of pushing the claims of his friends and adherents, there is nothing to prove that he was making use of his audiences to poison the royal mind against the head of the Administration.

The war clouds which were again threatening the peace of the Continent had long been patent to every observer. France and England, though nominally at peace, were in a state of open warfare in the widely separated regions of India and America. Lord Albemarle, the British Ambassador in Paris, had not the requisite skill to handle a difficult negotiation, and only widened the breach which might possibly have been avoided in the early stages of the new contest. Upon his death at the end of 1754, Lord Hertford was appointed to succeed him, but was prevented from taking up his post by the menacing condition of affairs. The proposals put forward by the Marquis de Mirepoix, the French Ambassador in London, for the adjustment of the boundaries in America, were utterly unacceptable. In effect, it was proposed that the

<sup>1</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, January 3, 1755 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 224).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 21, 1755 (Add. MSS. 35,414). Lady Caroline Fox's uncle, Lord Albemarle, had recently died in Paris, heavily in debt, leaving his widow and family in moderate circumstances.

whole of the Continent north and west of the Ohio valley should be retained in French hands. The chief features of these *pourparlers* were the weakness of Robinson and the diplomatic triumph of Granville, who duped Mirepoix into belief in his desire for peace, whereas in reality he was one of those who were keenest for war. Mirepoix was hampered by the unreadiness of his country for any lengthy struggle, and by the necessity of referring everything to Rouillé, the Foreign Minister in Paris. He looked upon Fox as the most warlike of the Cabinet, and feared him accordingly. He even went so far as to hint to Newcastle the danger of such a colleague, and paid him the compliment of urging that his removal would tend to remove French suspicion.<sup>1</sup> In the meanwhile, the French were secretly equipping a strong fleet of ships destined for America. Yet the rumours of these preparations were stoutly denied by Mirepoix, who in his turn remained in complete ignorance of the British counter-preparations.

The measures adopted by the British Government in the early part of 1755 were quite inadequate to cope with the emergency, which might, at any moment, have arisen. A large number of troops had been disbanded after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and had not been replaced. Walpole tells us that Newcastle was unwilling to raise fresh regiments, from jealousy of Cumberland, who would have the nomination of the officers.<sup>2</sup> But at length, on March 25, the King sent a message to Parliament asking for an increase of the forces in both services. The Commons voted a million for that purpose: new regiments were raised, others augmented, and five thousand marines were enlisted and placed under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty.<sup>3</sup> An order to equip seventeen

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, i. 382.

<sup>3</sup> These were intended to take the place of the marine regiments disbanded in 1748. The decision to transfer them to the naval authorities was due to a suggestion from Cumberland at Aix-la-Chapelle. He looked on them as "neither sea nor land forces" (*Barrow's Life of Anson*, pp. 210, 233).

ships of the line without loss of time, issued by Robinson on January 20, was probably due to Fox's initiative.<sup>1</sup> His active desire to further Cumberland's plans took the form of hostility to Newcastle at a Cabinet meeting held next day. Yet the Admiralty were still behindhand with their preparations. Admiral Boscawen's fleet, which was despatched to intercept the French on their voyage to America, was weak in numbers. It set sail at the end of April, inferior in ships to the French, who had 3,000 troops on board. Although war was not declared, Boscawen, coming up with them in June off the American coast, captured two of their vessels which had been separated by fog from the main body. The remainder gained a safe anchorage in Louisburg harbour. His success, too slight to be of any material advantage, destroyed the last hope of peace.

Notwithstanding the critical state of the country, George insisted on carrying out his intention of visiting his beloved Electorate at the end of April. Ministers had striven to turn him from his purpose, but in vain. The unpopularity of his resolution gave rise to a ridiculous scene in the House of Lords. Lord Poulett, a former Lord of the Bedchamber, notified his intention, early in April, to move the House to address His Majesty against the journey to Hanover. He was a friend of Fox, who, recognising the disrespect involved, earnestly endeavoured to dissuade him from coming forward. At first Poulett listened to reason. Although he had rehearsed his speech to many of his fellow peers, he sent word to the House, after keeping them waiting for fully half an hour, that he had nothing to trouble them with that day.<sup>2</sup> Then, terrified of having given offence to the King, he implored Fox and Lady Yarmouth to make his peace. He was

<sup>1</sup> M. Waddington, in his *Louis XV et le renversement des alliances*, p. 75, states that Fox signed the order; but this is most unlikely.

<sup>2</sup> R. Rigby to Bedford, April 17, 1755 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 160). See also Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 383: *Letters*, iii. 304.

especially anxious to obtain a message direct from the monarch, but the one which reached him was uncompromising. "When the letter was obtain'd, which was wrote at Mr Fox's request, the King said, 'Would you advise one to thank Lord Poulett for not hitting me a slap in the face?'"<sup>1</sup> Dissatisfaction at the reply caused Poulett to revert to his former intention, and after several attempts in which his courage failed him, he at last brought forward his motion on April 24, in a modified form. Chesterfield moved to adjourn. Poulett enquired, amidst much laughter, what would then become of his motion; and insisted upon dividing the House. He found himself alone!

Parliament was prorogued next day; and the King left for Hanover on the 28th, accompanied by Lady Yarmouth and Holderness.

The refusal of the King to abandon his journey led to far-reaching results in the domestic history of the country. The Leicester House party were driven to renew their activity in the political world. The appointment of a Regency was necessary, and to Newcastle's dismay the Duke of Devonshire suggested that Cumberland should take the post. In view of the provisions of the bill of 1751, the proposal was ludicrous. As Walpole rightly points out, had the King died abroad, Cumberland "must have descended from his dignity, to be at the head of the council to the parliamentary sole Regent, the Princess." The idea seems to have emanated from the brain of old Horace Walpole, who was in the utmost alarm lest the opportunity would be lost of preparing for the now inevitable war. He qualified it with the recommendation that the Princess of Wales's wishes should be consulted.<sup>2</sup> But no attempt was made to conciliate her, and, though Cumberland was relegated to the position of President of a Regency of sixteen, the sting remained. Although the views of the

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum, in Fox's handwriting.

<sup>2</sup> Coxe's *Memoirs of Lord Walpole*, p. 419, etc



Princess and her brother-in-law were identical upon the question of war, her distrust of his motives was accentuated by the marked ascendancy which he was gaining in the counsels of the state. She therefore thought fit to safeguard her own position and to look about for fresh alliances. The moment seemed opportune to soften the discontents of the Grenvilles, and of Pitt, the former associate of her husband. Indeed, that brotherhood was her sole remaining resource; for Newcastle now shared with Cumberland and his followers the ban of her displeasure.<sup>1</sup>

The stars were certainly favourable to the success of the Princess's intrigues. A few days before the King left England Pitt had discussed his position with old Horace. The latter for some months had expressed his desire to adjust the situation by an accommodation between the Paymaster and the Secretary-at-War. With this object in view, he called on Pitt, on his own initiative, perhaps representing his visit as an overture from the First Lord of the Treasury. Pitt, weary of remaining in the background, urged his own immediate removal from the list of proscriptions, and demanded the promise of a Secretaryship of State whenever a vacancy might occur. When Walpole informed Newcastle of what had passed, his reply "was not explicit; at least not flattering."<sup>2</sup> His Grace had not yet foreseen the necessity for Pitt's aid, and vented his wrath on the bearer of such outrageous conditions.

<sup>1</sup> The Princess was outspoken about Newcastle's falseness and cowardice, in a conversation with Dodington. She stated her conviction that the present system could not continue.

<sup>2</sup> Young Horace (*Memoirs*, i. 397) states that Pitt himself opened this negotiation. But in his "Remarks" (*Chatham Corres.*, i. 135) the latter talks of "a sort of overture made through Mr Walpole," which he thought might become the foundation "for some conversation." In the course of this he thought that he would be able to make his own terms, and thus avoid falling under an obligation to Fox for any favour which might be vouchsafed to him. Dodington (*Diary*, p. 338) hints that Walpole had been sent directly by Newcastle.

Smarting under this rebuff, Pitt was in the mood to turn a ready ear to any hint of advances from Leicester House. In vain he had striven to wear down the dislike of the old King. He resolved for the future to cultivate the good graces of the heir-apparent, and to give ocular demonstration of his good intentions by open rupture with Cumberland and his followers. Nor was this distasteful to him. He was more jealous than ever of Fox, now a member of the Regency Board. The thought of gaining promotion through his rival's generosity was too galling to be contemplated. Fox was at His Royal Highness's beck and call, and was therefore not a free agent. Doubtless too the tale of his faithlessness in the winter had by this time reached Pitt's ears, and had lost nothing in the telling.

Early in May came his opportunity. The two men were present at a social gathering in Lord Hillsborough's garden on May 9. Thinking that Fox had left, Pitt told his host, "that all connection between him and Mr Fox was over." "The ground was altered"; for Fox was now a member of the Cabinet, and of the Regency. He would himself be "second to none."<sup>1</sup> At this moment Fox returned, and was surprised to hear the same from Pitt's own lips, in even more heated language. "If Fox succeeded, and so made way for him," he said, "he would not accept the seals of Secretary from him, nor acknowledge any superiority. He would win his own way, and be behoven to no one." In reply to Fox's interrogation, he remarked that, "a winter in the Cabinet and a summer's Regency" could alone put them "on the same ground."<sup>2</sup>

Next day, distressed at the outburst, Hillsborough tried to patch up the quarrel. But Pitt was adamant. "He

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 320. Dodington gives the only detailed account of this conversation.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Pitt's "Remarks" (*Chatham Corres.*, i. 135). His reflections correspond very closely with the expressions used on this occasion. Pitt appears to hint at some suggestion that he should take Fox's place as Secretary-at-War.

esteemed Mr Fox," he said, "but all connection with him was at an end." He further desired Hillsborough to inform Fox that he hoped that there might be "no further conversation on the subject."

Cannot Pitt's secret interview on the 10th with the Princess of Wales, which Walpole reports, account for his sudden change of attitude? He called "in form" two days later at Holland House, and confirmed all that he had said at Hillsborough's; but "was friendly to the highest degree," and spoke with the "utmost civility." He professed friendship for Fox, and enmity to Newcastle, Murray and Stone. He protested, in answer to a question from Fox, that he did not suspect him of trying to rise above him. "Yet," said Fox, "are we on incompatible lines?" "Not on incompatible, but on convergent," was the enigmatical reply, the meaning of which seemed to Fox not altogether clear. Indeed, Pitt went so far as to announce, on his honour, that he considered Fox blameless. He dropped one solitary hint only during the interview as to the cause of the breach. "Here is the Duke King," said he, "and you are his Minister." Fox hastened to point out that Cumberland had no more power at the Regency Board than he himself, and that His Royal Highness did not look upon his appointment as aggrandizement in any sense of the word.<sup>1</sup>

But here we discover an inkling of the truth. Pitt was apprehensive of Fox's friendship for Cumberland, and of his growing intimacy with Lord Granville. On personal and political grounds alike, he felt inspired to steer clear of his quondam friend, when once he could feel his feet upon solid ground. The Princess of Wales had set the ball rolling. Consequently, his effort to gain his ends could, he thought, be facilitated by the course which he was mapping out for himself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 397, 398. See also H. Fox to Hartington, May 13, 1755 (Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 155).

<sup>2</sup> *Grenville Corres.*, i. 432.

At the moment Fox saw no reason to doubt the straightforward explanation of Pitt's altered attitude. It was certainly an unforeseen complication, which he agreed with Ellis and Hartington was best kept as secret as possible. He felt certain from Pitt's expressions of contempt for Newcastle, that no agreement had been arrived at between them. As yet no suspicion of a treaty with Leicester House had entered Fox's mind, although he was aware that some *rapprochement* was taking place.

Indeed, it was not till late in May that a distinct and formal offer was made to Pitt and his relatives from that quarter. The negotiation was entrusted to Sir Richard Lyttelton, and, with the help of Lord Bute, the Princess's new adviser, was speedily brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Pitt received definite assurances of the Princess's "protection and support." By this agreement, he and his friends "should to their utmost support the Princess and her son; should oppose the Duke, and raise a clamour against him; and as to the King, they were to submit to his government, provided he would govern as they directed him."<sup>1</sup>

By the middle of July, Fox was in full possession of the facts. His eyes were opened, and he understood what had been hidden from him two months before. The Princess of Wales was at the bottom of that scene at Hillsborough's, which, as Fox had often told the latter, appeared done "as if it were absolutely necessary it should be done on that very day."<sup>2</sup> Pitt had thrown him over, in order to facilitate alliance with his bitterest enemy. Fox's misgivings were first aroused by the discovery that even those who favoured him were to be proscribed by Leicester House. Andrew Stone, formerly the confidential adviser of the Princess, was no longer

<sup>1</sup> Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, July 16, 1755 (Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 160).



well received there, and Fox was informed that the fact was due to his recognised partiality for Fox himself.<sup>1</sup>

And now the Princess's faction, reinforced by Pitt, was no negligible quantity. Newcastle and Hardwicke paid their court without success; and Cumberland, instigated perhaps by Fox, made advances for a reconciliation with his nephew and sister-in-law at the end of June. The attempt failed, and Fox was correspondingly dejected.<sup>2</sup> He was beginning to realise that his impatience in the winter of 1754 was to bear bitter fruit.

During his residence on the Continent the King occupied himself with schemes for the safety of Hanover. Realising the activity of the war party at home, he strained every nerve to accelerate measures for the defence of the Electorate. The nefarious designs of his hated nephew, Frederick of Prussia, were his principal stumbling-block. The two small subsidiary treaties, concluded with Bavaria and Saxony some three or four years before, were on the point of expiring. As the time seemed approaching when the services of their troops might be required, these States refused to renew their obligations except at exorbitant rates. The King therefore turned to Hesse-Cassel, and, with the assistance of Holdernessee, concluded an agreement for 8,000 men, whenever they should be required.<sup>3</sup> A further treaty, on a far vaster scale, was projected with Russia, whereby the Czarina Elizabeth was to provide 55,000 troops for the use of Great Britain.

The magnitude of these transactions became a source of grave anxiety to Newcastle. He was alarmed at the thoughts of the reception which might be accorded to these subsidies by the House of Commons. He realised his hastiness in administering the recent snub to the

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's hint to the Princess, that Stone was one of Newcastle's secret advisers, cannot have advanced him in her favour (Dodington's *Diary*, p. 327).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>3</sup> An additional 4,000 troops were also to be provided in certain eventualities.

Paymaster, whose services would now have been of such inestimable value. He therefore despatched a letter to Holderness,<sup>1</sup> asking the King's permission to promise Pitt a seat in the Cabinet. Something, too, he thought, should be found for Egmont, who was said to be in great favour with Prince George; and also for Sir George Lee. Fox, he believed, would be satisfied with his present position, so long as he was properly treated. In this letter, which finally drew a reluctant consent from the King, Newcastle concealed the fact that he had already approached Pitt through the medium of Charles Yorke, Lord Hardwicke's son.

At the beginning of July, James Grenville, in conversation with Newcastle, had thrown out hints that Pitt still pined for "confidence and regard." The meaning of the words was obscure. Hardwicke thought "something lower than the employment of Secretary of State" was indicated.<sup>2</sup> But an opening so opportune could not be neglected, and Yorke was put forward to ascertain what Pitt really meant. The interview took place on July 6. Pitt's demands had stiffened since his conversation with Walpole. He would now be Secretary of State, invested with real power, and would insist on the inclusion of certain of his friends in the Government.<sup>3</sup> He seemed almost to resent Newcastle's assurance in approaching him without some definite offer.

It can therefore have been with little confidence that the Lord Chancellor himself entered into a conference with the Paymaster a month later. He had Newcastle's authority to offer him a seat in the Cabinet. But further than this he could not go. The events of the last few weeks had tended to increase, rather than to diminish, the high-handed attitude which Pitt now felt himself at

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Holderness, July 11, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,857).

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 5, 1755 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 228).

<sup>3</sup> C. Yorke to Hardwicke, July 7, 1755 (*ibid.*). See also Dodington's *Diary*, p. 340.

liberty to adopt. The Hessian Treaty had been signed at the Regency Board without a murmur, in obedience to the King's command. But when the Treasury warrants necessary to carry it into effect were presented to Legge, he flatly refused to put pen to paper.<sup>1</sup> He could have devised no subtler revenge for the indignities of the last twelve months. Newcastle was constrained to sit and suffer in silence, while his Chancellor of the Exchequer was being introduced by Pitt into the bosom of the Leicester House circle. To dismiss him would have been to add fuel to the widespread unpopularity of the subsidiary treaties.

Pitt's visit to Hardwicke, and his subsequent interview in September with Newcastle himself, were equally futile. His demands were in the ascending scale. To the Chancellor he professed himself unwilling to take the Secretary of State's seals, if offered to him, unless the King's displeasure was completely withdrawn. And when he had ascertained from Newcastle that he had no authority to offer him more than a seat in the Cabinet, he took offence because a Secretaryship could not be found for him. So it was with the question of the treaties. To Hardwicke he announced that he gave his full and cordial support to a maritime and colonial war. If Hanover was conquered, at least it could be restored at the end of the war, and compensation paid to the King. Subsidies, the country could not abide. They were too expensive to be borne. His own views he did not divulge, beyond some reasonable objections to the Hessian and Russian Treaties. He left the impression, however, that he would not persist in his opposition to them. But in discussing the same topic with Newcastle his repugnance blazed out. He would be no party to a system of subsidies. He might acquiesce in the Hessian Treaty, as the King insisted upon it, but only in the event of the other being abandoned. Further than this he could not and would not go.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Legge was not a member of the Regency.

<sup>2</sup> For these interviews see *Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 230, 237.

A subsequent conversation with Hardwicke confirmed the fact that Pitt would not swallow the Russian agreement at any price. He advanced at the same time a further objection—the impossibility of acting with Fox.<sup>1</sup> This new plea, doubtless, was put forward as a fresh argument to broaden the basis of his refusal. He had spoken openly to Dodington on the subject a few days before. “He wished Fox very well, and had nothing to complain of.” But they were not “on the same ground”; Fox had owned that he was not his own master, and how could he, who was “*sui juris*,<sup>2</sup> act in connection with one who was not?” Fox would go no lengths against Newcastle when Pitt required it. He would compromise everything, and by these means, “had taken the smooth part, and had left him to be fallen upon. Fox had risen upon his shoulders: but he did not blame him.” “Besides,” said he, “Fox was uniting with his bitterest enemies, and was lately reported by Newcastle to have offered himself to him.”<sup>3</sup> Here Dodington stopped him with the remark that he was convinced that this was false, and elicited, in reply, Pitt’s belief that Fox’s word was far more to be trusted than his Grace’s.<sup>4</sup>

It was now clear to Newcastle and to the Chancellor that they would have to face the active opposition of Pitt and Legge to the treaties when Parliament met. Lee also had signified his dislike of the proposals; and Egmont was known to have placed his conscience in Pitt’s hands. In the Upper House, hostility was threatened by the Duke of Devonshire, a pillar of the Whig party; and Bedford was rumoured to be meditating the same course. Even Cumberland and his followers were lukewarm, not to say cold. Yet if Newcastle was to maintain

<sup>1</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 15, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,859).

<sup>2</sup> Independent.

<sup>3</sup> The allusion is to a conversation between Newcastle and Granville, which we shall have occasion to relate in due course.

<sup>4</sup> Dodington’s *Diary*, p. 375.



himself in office, the passage of the subsidies through Parliament must somehow be secured. Inability to carry out the King's pet project would ensure his undying resentment.

Three suggestions commended themselves to his Grace: that he should retire in favour of Fox, who would take the Treasury; that Pitt should be granted his demand for a Secretaryship, and Legge remain Chancellor of the Exchequer; or that Fox should be given full powers to carry on the business of the House of Commons, with the inclusion in the Government of members who would previously engage to carry out their share of the work.<sup>1</sup>

Hardwicke and Newcastle both agreed that the last suggestion was the least evil, and the one most likely to commend itself to the King. That Fox would rise to the occasion they had little reason to doubt. They believe that he already intimated his willingness to do so. In a discussion with Newcastle, about the middle of August, on the difficulties connected with the treaties, Granville said that Fox had twice informed him of the opposition designed to these subsidies, and had hinted that he might join the malcontents, unless he were satisfied. Fox had remarked that Newcastle should have a "lieutenant," and had expressed readiness to serve him faithfully in that capacity. Newcastle ridiculed the notion of a lieutenant, who was to be a "general" over him, and returned no "particular answer."<sup>2</sup> He suspected that Fox had heard rumours of his overtures to Pitt and Egmont; and was consequently afraid of being left out in the cold. Hardwicke agreed, but counselled soft words; although he foresaw no special danger of Fox opposing the subsidies.

Yet a fortnight later Fox categorically denied that he had given Granville any commission to treat for him.

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 3, 1755 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 237, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, August 22, 1755 (*ibid.*, ii. 234).

"The Duke of Newcastle told a friend of mine that he had an overture from me by Lord Granville, which is not true; but his Grace might, perhaps, from what Lord Granville said, conclude it came from me."<sup>1</sup> This, as we have already seen, is corroborated by Dodington.<sup>2</sup> We may not unfairly suspect that the Lord President, being a strong supporter of subsidies, sought to engage Fox in defence of that system. What chances would they have, if he too were to join the rebels? May we not also conjecture that Fox would raise no objections to suggestions thrown out on his behalf, however unauthorised? If he had sufficiently conquered his former mistrust of Granville, he might even have purposely raised the question in conversation, in the belief that his words would be passed on to the right quarter. Nor would this constitute an overture in the literal sense of the word. He was still eager for high office, if only to show his contempt for the leader from whose hands he must receive it.

Yet there are signs that a sense of apathy was stealing over his ambition. The difficulties against which he had to contend were blunting his better impulses. He was tiring in the race, and was beginning instinctively to yearn for that repose which he had sacrificed with the commencement of his political career. The following passage in a letter to his confidante, Lady Hervey, is certainly indicative of the change:

"As to news regarding myself, I don't know that there is the least alteration since I saw your Ladyship. I expect none, and make myself very easy with considering that it is at least doubtful whether it is not better as it is. For I am sure you agree with me in admiring Ld Rochester's comparison of those who would be great in our little Government, to boys who take pains and incur danger in climbing for fruit that a solid pig would disdain. I am

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, September 1, 1755 (Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 534).

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 258.

too ambitious, therefore, to be very anxious about any views permitted to ambition here. And I may add (what had not happen'd when Ld Rochester wrote) that such people have succeeded, and do now succeed, that a sensible man can not make up to himself from vanity what may be wanting in power. Who can be vain of having enroll'd his name in the list of our late or present statesmen? For my part, I own I have a little vanity in seeing them so afraid of letting me in amongst them, and, without any power, can with truth say I envy nobody who has a share of it." <sup>1</sup>

The care with which Fox approached the problem of the subsidies is sufficient proof that he expected to be wooed by the First Lord. The latter was fully aware of the value of his assistance. Once won, Fox could be counted upon to expend all his energy on securing the business in hand. It was always so with him. Rumours were in the air that he had accepted Cabinet rank, in order to undermine Newcastle and subvert his authority. This was certainly slander. His Grace was faithfully obeyed, and expressed satisfaction with Fox's conduct during the spring. There were, besides, tactical considerations in gaining him, which Newcastle would not have overlooked. Cumberland and his party were, as a whole, adverse to the treaties. To decoy Fox into open support of these measures, might be the means of dividing and weakening that faction. How isolated and ambiguous would then be his position!

The war party had proved a thorn in Newcastle's side throughout the spring and summer. His Grace wrote to Holderness that Cumberland was doing all he could to forward hostilities, although he professed anxiety to avoid them.<sup>2</sup> The truth was that the Duke, whose opinion Fox shared, had believed that if it had been sufficiently brought home to the French that England meant business, war

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady Hervey, July 21, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> July 22, 1755, "Entre nous" (Add. MSS. 32,857).

might have been avoided. He had suspected that they would have been willing to accept the ministers' "reasonable proposals regarding America,"<sup>1</sup> rather than run the risk of disaster from lack of preparation. He was wrong. His own installation as head of the Regency had convinced the French Government that any hope of an accommodation was fading away.<sup>2</sup> Mirepoix, the French Ambassador, retired to France without taking leave, on the receipt of the news of Boscawen's success. This was during the month of July. The next dispatches announced the capture of Fort Beauséjour, in Nova Scotia, by Colonel Monckton. And, finally, came the distressing news that the main British force in America, operating from Virginia, had been almost annihilated.

The reinforcements for America had left England in January, under the command of General Braddock, a personal friend and favourite of Cumberland. Though brave and capable, his coarse and obstinate nature unfitted him for service in that Continent. He despised the colonial militia for their lack of discipline, and looked to win battles in the forests of the Alleghany mountains by the methods which he would have employed in the Low Countries. Too proud to learn, he paid the penalty of his ignorance with his life's blood. Ambushed by the French and their Indian allies on the Monongahela river, a tributary of the Ohio, a few short miles from his objective, Fort Duquesne, his men were helplessly mown down by their unseen foes. Braddock was carried from the field mortally wounded, and at his fall his troops sought safety in flight, leaving behind them more than half their number dead and dying. Only 450 men, out of 1,350, returned unharmed.

Two other separate columns, wholly consisting of and commanded by colonials, were directed respectively against Crown Point, on Lake Champlain, and against

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, August 10. 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> Waddington's *Louis XV et le renversement des alliances*, p. 93.



Niagara. Neither enterprise proved successful ; although the southernmost expedition was at least able to boast of one victory over the French.

The instructions which had been issued to Boscawen and Braddock were given with Newcastle's full approval. But the orders to Sir Edward Hawke, whose fleet was manned for service in the Channel and for the defence of the shores of England, were a different matter. If hostile and unlimited, as the war party desired, a *casus belli* might arise at any moment within 48 hours. Cumberland, now convinced that a breach was inevitable, desired to throw off the mask and openly proclaim war. Newcastle, as usual, preferred to postpone the evil day, and contrived, by a series of subterfuges, to delay for two months the decision of the Regency and consequently the despatch of the squadron.

At last, on July 15, Newcastle wrote to Holdernessee that he would consent to Hawke receiving permission "to attack any number of men-of-war or merchantmen, but that he should not begin hostilities in Europe for the sake of a single ship." Again he changed his mind ; and a few days later instructions were signed, directing the Admiral to capture ships-of-the-line, but to spare all other French craft.<sup>1</sup> Anson, the First Lord of the Admiralty, told Fox at the Council that there were a hundred objections to this course, but that, as France was certain to proclaim war in a few days, there was no harm in gratifying those at the upper end of the table by signing the document without protest. Yet no such declaration of war followed, and Fox regretted that he had acted upon this advice. He took steps a few days later, in conjunction

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Holdernessee, "Entre nous," July 22, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,857). Newcastle gained his point by announcing the King's preference for this policy. Cumberland, whose wish it was to attack shipping in every form, thereupon gave way. Granville's view was that no merchant ships should be molested, "so as not to vex your neighbours for a little muck"; but advocated the capture of war vessels of all sizes (Dodington's *Diary*, pp. 345, 358).

with Cumberland and the Duke of Marlborough, to secure substantial alterations. He told Newcastle that though he had raised no objection at the Regency Board, he now expressed his disapprobation to him most strongly in private. Marlborough took the same line. In consequence of their representations, a message was brought to Anson, when at dinner at Holland House, calling a meeting that evening at the Duke's apartment. It was there decided to order Hawke to seize every French vessel upon which he could lay hands.<sup>1</sup> Before the end of the year 300 merchant ships and 6,000 seamen had been taken by the English fleets.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding this provocation France still took no steps to retaliate, limiting her action to protests and threats. As yet unprepared for war, she was bent on proving to the world the aggressiveness of Great Britain. Even a man-of-war captured from the English was allowed to go scot-free. The depredations of Hawke and his fellow-admirals were stigmatised as piracy, and condemned as a breach of international agreement.

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power upon History*, p. 285.

### CHAPTER XIII

A FEW days after King George's return to England about the middle of September, Fox found that he had a new decision to make. He had reached the turning-point in his career. He was approached by Granville, acting for Newcastle, with offers of further preferment, on condition that he would pledge himself to support the subsidiary treaties, within and without the walls of Westminster.

The subject was one upon which Fox had been careful to adopt a neutral policy. In 1751, he had shown himself in favour of modest subsidies, framed to secure the co-operation of the German States against France. But that was in times of peace. Now there was war; and under the changed circumstances he had refrained from tying his hands in any way. "Legge did not sign the order for the Hessian money at the Treasury, and, I believe, makes no scruple of declaring his opinion. I have been more cautious in giving, I may say in *forming*, mine; but have, by not signing it at the Cockpit, kept myself at liberty."<sup>1</sup>

Possibly he had arrived at no definite conclusion. As we have already noticed, he had never seriously undertaken the study of the relations of England with foreign

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, August 10. Hardwicke wrote to Newcastle that he could not understand what was meant by the statement that Fox had not signed the order for ratification. The Lords Justices had simply passed a minute, recommending that he, as Lord Chancellor, should seal it. But on second thoughts, he believed that it must have been the warrant at which Legge had taken offence. It was quite an ordinary thing for some of the Lords at the foot of the Council-table to omit to sign documents. (August 23, 1755. Add. MSS. 32,858.)

countries. The question lay outside the range of his special province. It is more than probable therefore that he should have followed his patron's lead, as in former years. Cumberland had spoken to Fox of his regret that the system was to be introduced. It was costly, and was therefore bound to be unpopular with the masses.<sup>1</sup> Fox himself, if we are to believe Walpole, had also "dropped intimations of his dislike to the treaties." "We have made a treaty with Hesse," he wrote, "and another with Russia, to be followed with other subsidies, or these will be useless; and if followed by other subsidies, how can we find money to pay or place to assemble these troops? And perhaps I may add, members to vote them?"<sup>2</sup>

But his mind was far from being made up, and, when the time came, he "was not obdurate."<sup>3</sup> He could still maintain his view, that a maritime and colonial war was likely to prove the most satisfactory for the country; but he prepared to swallow his doubts, and to go one step further. He resolved in future to defend the money payments to continental powers.

We have seen that Newcastle believed that his recent conversation with Lord Granville had been inspired by Fox himself. He therefore approached the Lord President, and implored him to act as negotiator. His Grace's absurd terror of the situation is vividly brought home to us by his offer to resign his office in Granville's favour. The latter declined with a laugh, saying that he was not fit to be first Minister. He suggested that the proper post for Fox was the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.<sup>4</sup> To this Newcastle angrily demurred. They would not be in agreement for a fortnight, he said. "It must not be."<sup>5</sup> The proposition was whittled down to the lead in the House of Commons, with full assurances that no material

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, August 10.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 400.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 402.

<sup>5</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, September 23, 1755 (*ibid.*, i. 535).



information should be withheld from him. Newcastle was as chary as ever of surrendering an iota of his power.

Fox and Newcastle met by appointment on September 20. Waldegrave was also present. He had been called in to assist, as Granville was said to be "too warm and peremptory to conduct such an affair well."<sup>1</sup>

"I was with the D. of N. (Lord Waldegrave being by) 4 hours yesterday morning. He said Ld Granville had insisted upon my being Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that was the only thing in his power he would not do, as it must, in the hands of him who had the conduct of the H. of Commons, destroy his power entirely. I, very artfully, because directly contrary to my opinion, agreed that it would, so it now stands that he won't let me be Chr of the Exchequer, not that I refus'd it. I believe you think that being Chr of the Exchr under him, with access to the King to report debates 3 or 4 times in a sessions only, is, instead of what he call'd it, little more than one of the Secrs to the Treasury. That being over, he told me the King had directed that no two or three of his servants should meet on political business, whether relative to the H. of Commons or no, but that I should be in the midst of them. Promises, in general meaning nothing, he was profuse of; and upon the whole, it is plain he do's not intend to part with any power more than in March was twelvemonth; tho' he endeavours to varnish the design over, which he thought could not appear too bad to me then. It was, 'We shall do very well, we shall never disagree. Do face this storm, stem this torrent for me, and (as Louis XI said to the Virgin Mary) *je sçais ce que je te donnerai.*'

"It is not on this foot you may believe the D. of Marlborough wishes me to agree. But he says truly that he is much more frighten'd than he would own to me, and is sure that he will make me Secr. of State.

"I came away unengag'd, and left him more frightened than he was before as to the Opposition in general. But that I did not intend to join it, I think he must see. I could not disguise that, without saying, 'If I am satisf'y'd,

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 20, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,859).

this measure is right ; if not, most destructive,' which is a profligacy I could not put on for half an hour. Adieu." <sup>1</sup>

Fox had thus opened the conversation : " My Lord, is it not fit that this should be the last time that we should meet to try to agree ? " " Yes," replied the Duke, " I think it is." " Then," said Fox, " if your Grace thinks so, it shall be so." This, in the fulness of his heart, Fox probably intended. It was in his nature to meet good faith by good faith. His word, once given, was sacred. Newcastle was differently constituted. He was seriously perturbed by Fox's demand for a special mark of favour from the King, and by his unmistakable aspirations to become Secretary of State—a far greater boon than he had intended to grant. Yet he consoled himself, if give way he must, with the King's openly expressed belief that Fox would be sure " to do ill " in that office—a curious side-light on his method of settling high government appointments.

The niggardly spirit in which he approached the bargain is apparent in every line of a letter addressed to his sister-in-law :

" If Mr Fox was to be taken, two things were to be done. First, that it should appear that Lord Chancellor and I did it ; secondly, that it should be done so as to be of real use, by putting Fox in good humour and making the defence of my Administration his business. The first point I endeavoured to find out, was whether the King had any secret inclination for Fox, and if there was any probability of his gaining any separate credit with the King. I am firmly convinced that the King is sorry for the necessity of doing what is done ; that he is resolved to support Lord Chancellor and me at the head of his affairs ; that any attempt from Mr Fox for altering that resolution would ruin him at once ; and that the King will not suffer Mr Fox to do anything, *even in the House*

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Welbore Ellis [September 21, 1755].

of Commons, without first consulting me; and I am persuaded Fox sees it in this light. I told the King Fox said, we must *stand and fall together*. The King said, he (Fox) may very well *fall without you*. This being the state of the case, the making Fox *thus* Secretary of State was the best thing for me. He has an office which the King told me he would do ill in. He can seldom see the King without my Lord Holdernessee. He is removed from Secretary-of-War, so far removed from the Duke of Cumberland. Above all, it has given me an opportunity to show the world that the King would put into that office (as he has done) the most declared friend of mine, Lord Barrington, without consulting the Duke. There is one circumstance that must be agreeable to you, that Mr Fox comes in the declared opposer of the Duke of Devonshire's and Mr Legge's measures: and that must turn out to the service of him (I mean myself) against whom the Duke of Devonshire directs all his malice." <sup>1</sup>

On the morning of the 22nd, Fox received the following letter from Cumberland:

*"Monday, nine in ye morning.*

"MR FOX. You are expected at court this day. Offers are intended you, and at Mr Pitt's expense; but with a feather in your cap, and the direction of ye House of Commons. I beg I may see you before my levee, for I should rather believe that I shall hear of it this morning from the best authority. I remain, yr very affectionate friend,

"WILLIAM."

The above reference to Pitt is ambiguous. Can it be that the King and Newcastle had in their minds to satisfy Fox's desire for a "mark of favour" by a renewed offer of the Paymastership, Pitt's place? Both were reluctant to dismiss Robinson, in order to create the necessary vacancy. The ex-ambassador had proved himself amenable to Newcastle's methods of business, had a thorough

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Lady K. Pelham, September 26, 1755 (Torrens's *History of Cabinets*, ii. 230).

knowledge of diplomatic procedure, and besides was personally acceptable to the King. The relations between Pitt and Fox were now so changed, that the latter might have been tempted with the office which he had scorned to contemplate a twelvemonth before. Fox makes no allusion to any such proposal in his letter to Hartington, recounting the incidents of his audience. In fact, he definitely remarked that the King "entered into no particular destination" for him. Yet in a list, in Newcastle's handwriting, entitled *Disposition of Employments in the House of Commons*, the office of Paymaster was to be apportioned to him, in the event of Pitt's retirement or dismissal.<sup>1</sup>

Fox's conversation with the King turned chiefly on the subject of subsidies, and on the difficulty of securing a favourable reception for them in the House of Commons. He took this opportunity of finally burning his boats. He definitely declared himself in favour of the treaties, in or out of office, and promised the King his unwavering support. "I told His Majesty that he should, on this occasion, have my best service as a private soldier or as an officer, but I could not be both." It appears, however, that he insisted upon the Secretary's seals. "If this be done, I shall behave just as both you and they would have me; if not, I shall still be for the subsidies. It is my opinion. But I will be for them *out of place*; and in the act of vindicating the measure declare war with the Minister." <sup>2</sup> This shows a distinct advance on what he had written to Ellis on the 21st.<sup>3</sup> He had then contemplated the possibility of opposition both to the Government and to the treaties: now, he might oppose the former, but, in any case, would defend the latter.

Since Newcastle was satisfied that the King was on

<sup>1</sup> September 5, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,996).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Hartington. Docketed September 23, 1755. (Devonshire MSS., part printed in Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 535.) The letter was written on the afternoon of Fox's interview with the King.

<sup>3</sup> See *ants*, p. 267.



his side and had his assurance that nothing would be done without his knowledge, he was prepared to let Fox have his way. On the evening of the 24th, the latter was in a position to announce to Cumberland that he was to be Secretary of State, with the lead in the House of Commons. The Duke's reply shows no trace of pique or annoyance at his henchman's change of front upon the question of the subsidies. It gave him "all the satisfaction imaginable," to hear that Fox had at last obtained proper recognition.<sup>1</sup> In fact, his advice to him had been in favour of acceptance: and his own suspicion of the treaties appears also to have lessened. We shall find him subsequently assisting Fox in his efforts to secure votes for the Government.

Robinson returned to his old post in the Bedchamber, heartily pleased to be freed from his more arduous duties, and was further rewarded for his facility by a pension of £2,000 a year on the Irish Establishment.

Fox's supplementary demands were moderate. He stipulated for, and obtained the promise of, posts for five of his adherents, Sloper, Sir John Wynne, George Selwyn, William Gerard Hamilton<sup>2</sup> and Welbore Ellis. He had broached the subject to Newcastle on the 20th in general form, and no objection had been raised. "He is very reasonable about them, and only desires that they should go *pari passu* with others."<sup>3</sup> Fox looked upon Ellis, an intimate friend of Lord Hartington, as his best supporter "next to the Attorney-General,"<sup>4</sup> and worked hard to secure him "considerable promotion." He desired to see

<sup>1</sup> Cumberland to H. Fox, September 25, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> Known as "Single-speech Hamilton," from his remarkable maiden speech on the address in November 1755.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 4, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,859).

<sup>4</sup> Murray, whose friendship for Fox and support of the American expedition had drawn him closer to the Cumberland party.

The above quotations are taken from a paper entitled "Mr Fox's proposal to the Duke of Newcastle, September 20, 1755" (Holland House MSS.); and from a letter, W. Ellis to Hartington, October 7, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).

him installed at the War Office as his own successor, but this proved "impracticable," partly owing to "ill luck, partly to the D. of N.'s management." We have seen that Lord Barrington, the late Master of the Wardrobe, was Newcastle's selection for the post. He was on good terms with Fox, and at once requested him to present his humble respects to Cumberland, and to secure a favourable reception for him.<sup>1</sup> Fox, ever ready to oblige a friend, took up the task of smoothing his path with zest. The Duke had received no previous intimation of the appointment of his subordinate—a neglect nearly akin to discourtesy.<sup>2</sup> But under Fox's pacifying influence he promised to receive Barrington "very civilly," and even told him at their first interview that he had no one in view whom he would have preferred for the place.

It was arranged that these changes should not take effect until after the commencement of the session, for Fox had necessarily to seek re-election before assuming the duties of his new post. The subject of the treaties was certain to arise on the address, and he must be in his place in the House on the first day, to make his defence of them in public. In the meanwhile, it fell to his lot to turn his past experience to good effect. As the future leader of the House of Commons, he could employ his gifts of persuasion to win over the hostile and cajole the waverers. He had undertaken a herculean task, in endeavouring to enlist under his banner a band sufficiently redoubtable to withstand the onslaught of Pitt and his myrmidons; for it had been recently impossible to name a single member of weight in the House of Commons who had declared in favour of the subsidies.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, had Fox stiffened his back and refused to accept Newcastle's terms, the latter must assuredly have fallen.

<sup>1</sup> Barrington to H. Fox, September 26, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Lady Hervey, September 29, 1755.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, September 22, 1755.

Stone admitted the fact to Fox in conversation, shortly after the conclusion of the bargain.<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield's remark, that, "The Duke of Newcastle had turned out everybody else, and has now turned out himself," is true only in the sense of a prophetic inspiration. Without Fox's helping hand, his Grace's authority had assuredly vanished for the nonce.

The personal triumph which Fox had gained over his adversaries blinded him to the true aspect of the political situation. He had openly forced Newcastle's hand, and had secured, by his pertinacity, that position which should have been his by right at Pelham's death. He was on the high-road to satisfy his ambitions, as leader of the House of Commons, a post for which his education under Orford had eminently fitted him. As Secretary of State he was upon less certain ground. Ignorance of the methods of diplomacy and neglect of his opportunities to study the relations of foreign countries, were factors which upheld King George's contention that the post was unsuited to him. To prove a cipher in office was to jeopardise his newly found power.

The fact that the First Lord had been driven, by the coldness of those who had been previously approached, to grant Fox's demands, seemed to the latter to increase the magnitude of his victory. "Necessity brought them to me, confess'd necessity, which tho' not an obliging mediator may perhaps be the best guaranty."<sup>2</sup> But he forgot that he was still at the mercy of Newcastle's word, the value of which he already knew by bitter experience. A slip, or one indication of weakness might imperil the whole structure. To quote Horace Walpole, he must "very soon be first Minister, or be ruined."<sup>3</sup> He had failed to perceive that his own refusal would have speedily brought Newcastle to his feet as a suppliant. Had he

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 403.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Lady Hervey, September 29.

<sup>3</sup> H. Walpole to Sir H. Mann (*Letters*, iii. 349).

but waited, revenge would have been far sweeter on those terms.

It was certainly the wish of his associates that he should accept his Grace's offers. "If I have err'd now it has not been from haste or temper, nor is the error my own. What I have done is in consequence of the deliberate, express and concurring advice of *the Duke*, the D. of Marlborough, Lord Granville and Lord Waldegrave."<sup>1</sup> Walpole adversely criticised his resolution. "Fox," said he, "took care not to consult his former counsellors, who had been attentive only to his honour, but listened to men far less anxious for it."<sup>2</sup> Horace had been one of those whose advice was asked upon the former occasion, and perhaps spoke from pique. His counsel was always thrown into the balance against Newcastle, whom he looked on as the betrayer of his father. From this moment, his feelings towards Fox underwent a change; and, although their intimacy apparently remained unaltered, we shall have occasion to see that he introduced henceforward a note of bitterness into their relations.

A further incentive to take the seals was Fox's fear of being driven into opposition. He fully realised his impotence out of place. He would be isolated and alone. "Pitt could no more oppose with me," he wrote, "than go to court with me." "Perhaps Mr Pitt did more than anybody" towards making him "*a minister*," as the King now called him.<sup>3</sup> Besides, Fox had expressed strong views on the subject of Opposition, as Hartington took care to remind him in a homily upon the folly of such a course. "I remember an expression of yours which shou'd make you very cautious how you engage in Opposition. Your words were these: 'If ever I go into Opposition, I will never come back but with the whole.'"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, September 27, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 401.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Lady Hervey, September 29.

<sup>4</sup> Hartington to H. Fox, August 21, 1755.



Had Fox acted up to this maxim, he would have had to anticipate indefinite loss of power and income. He could ill afford to lose either. His style of living "continued profuse." If we are to believe Walpole's assertion, he had amassed large sums of money at the War Office through his secretary, Calcraft,<sup>1</sup> whom he placed in a position, as agent for various regiments, to sell commissions and traffic in promotions. But in this case, and if Fox had taken up "an intention to enrich himself precipitately," as his so-called friend malignantly suggests, he would have been less anxious to vacate so lucrative an office than he proved himself to be. It is more probable by far that any gain which Calcraft made from such ignoble practices found their way into his own pockets, for he died possessed of immense wealth. Fox's great fortune dates from his tenure of the Pay Office.

Little more than a month remained before the opening of the session. During this period, a majority for the treaties in both Houses had to be secured. Fox was soon hard at work in quarters where he believed that he had influence. He pictured the subsidies to the Duke of Argyll, "as preventive measures to keep Hanover from being attack'd in a quarrel purely British, and not steps towards, what I can assure your Grace is not intended, armaments in any other or nearer part of the Continent."<sup>2</sup> With Lord Shelburne and Lord Egremont he had no difficulty. Sandwich and Lord George Sackville, the Duke of Dorset's son, both showed signs of falling into line upon their own terms: and a peerage dangled before the eyes of old Horace Walpole had the desired effect, for notwithstanding strong prejudices against the Russian treaty, he proffered his support to the Government. He was even instrumental, with the assistance of the Lord Chancellor, in persuading the Duke of Devonshire to refrain

<sup>1</sup> John Calcraft (1726-1772), a protégé of Fox, whom he basely deserted in 1763.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Argyll, September 26, 1755.

from opposing the treaties openly in the House of Lords, although the latter had been proof against the entreaties of his son.

The conversion of Lord Halifax, President of the Board of Trade, Fox left to Cumberland and Newcastle. The Duke reported to Fox, that he "had had much conversation with him but without any effect, for he is really conscientiously against the measure, and yet sees the hurt it does the King's service to join in anything that raises a flame on this occasion." The First Lord was more successful, though Halifax was discontented and out of temper at his Grace's recent refusal to recommend him for the Garter. No actual offer was made to him, beyond a promise of places for two of his friends, Hillsborough and Dodington; but the prospect of advancement in the near future, possibly a seat in the Cabinet, was at least sufficient to shut his mouth.

Lord Hillsborough was one of those whom Fox had recommended to Newcastle on September 20. A special plea had been put forward on his behalf for the King's favour, should he "approve the measures." He was made Treasurer of the Chambers in December, and was put up to move the acceptance of the treaties in the Commons at the commencement of the session.

The conversion of Dodington was more difficult. His passion for place-hunting had long led him to divide his services between the rival courts. Devoid of principle and political morality, he had been wafted from side to side by each breath of wind which seemed favourable to his interests. To detach him from the pay of Leicester House was no impossibility. The price was the only matter in doubt. It was arranged that Fox should set the ball rolling by a visit to Dodington's house in Dorset; but negotiations were postponed until his return to town. On October 2, Dodington dined at Holland House, and a long conversation ensued. Fox was not sanguine of securing him. He feared that he might be too far engaged

against the treaties to be able to draw back ; but enlisted the sympathies of Lady Hervey, their mutual friend, on his side.<sup>1</sup> He reported to Newcastle that he found him favourably inclined, but unable to give an immediate answer. Dodington was anxious to bring in Sir Francis Dashwood with him, an arrangement to which Fox saw no objection whatever. The latter suggested that Halifax and Murray should be called in to help, and thought by that means that Dodington's reply, which was promised within ten days, would prove propitious.<sup>2</sup>

Murray agreed to join in the chase, but, on the 6th, by accident met Fox hastening to find him. Things were not going well. Dodington was chafing under the thought of past ill-treatment. The Comptroller's staff, which Newcastle had in his mind for him, would be quite insufficient temptation. He thought further offers must be made, and that the First Lord should take the negotiation into his own hands as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup> Newcastle thereupon arranged a meeting with Dodington at his house on the 10th. He found him even more strongly opposed to the Russian subsidy than Pitt.<sup>4</sup> Fox had not attempted to explain the arguments in favour of the treaties—perhaps he did not understand them himself, Dodington thought.<sup>5</sup> Newcastle put on his most persuasive manner and produced his most convincing arguments ; but all to no purpose. Yet a way had somehow to be found. Dodington had to be won at all costs. He had “certainly useful knowledge and abilities, tho' strangely betawdry'd.” His talents might prove “wonderfully mischievous in opposition.”<sup>6</sup> The siege continued, and on the 19th the garrison capitulated. Nothing

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady Hervey, September 29.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, October 2 and 3, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,859).

<sup>3</sup> W. Murray to Newcastle, October 7 ; Newcastle to Halifax, October 4, 1755 (*ibid.*).

<sup>4</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755 (*ibid.*).

<sup>5</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, Appendix, p. 493.

<sup>6</sup> Hillsborough to H. Fox, October 13, 1755.

definite was promised to him personally at the moment ; only accommodation for certain of his friends. But his reward was not long postponed, and in December he was appointed to the lucrative post of Treasurer of the Navy. Small wonder that the Princess of Wales received him "very coolly," when he sought an audience to explain his conduct! <sup>1</sup>

To have won over the Duke of Bedford under the very eyes of Leicester House was even a greater feather in Fox's cap. He was a prize greatly coveted by both sides. Thomas Potter, son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury and a protégé of Lord Temple, had been occupied that autumn, on behalf of Leicester House and Pitt, in inflaming men's minds against the treaties. To such employment his talent for intrigue was fully suited. He had persuaded Bedford to declare himself privately of that way of thinking, by promising that the defeat of the proposals would ensure a change of Government. The little Duke had never forgotten Newcastle's treatment of him when Secretary of State, and hated him accordingly. But it had not been all plane sailing to bring him to this point, for Pitt's outspoken refusal to act with Fox instilled doubts into his mind. "He hoped in God no one of his friends, particularly Mr Fox," would interfere to prevent Newcastle's destruction. Yet he could not see himself acting with Pitt. He favoured a maritime war, and disliked the idea of subsidies as much as ever he did in 1752 ; but he was not prepared to go so far as to make any public statement of his views.<sup>2</sup>

At this juncture Fox flashed upon the scene. He persuaded his friend Marlborough to give up the Privy Seal, and wrote to Lord Gower, offering the vacancy to his brother-in-law, Bedford. Gower forwarded the letter,

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> T. Potter to G. Grenville (end of September 1755) ; T. Potter to Temple (middle of October) (*Grenville Corres.*, i. 137, etc.). Bedford had spoken vehemently against subsidiary treaties in time of peace in the House of Lords. See *ante*, p. 169.



with the remark that he was glad that Newcastle was not in any way mixed up in the proposal, which would be made by the King himself. Bedford refused without loss of time. He said that he could accept nothing while Newcastle was at the head of affairs ; but expressed his regret at being unable to fall in with Fox's ideas, to whom no one could wish better than himself. He would have preferred to see Fox and Pitt reconciled, and to have come in with them.<sup>1</sup>

On October 31, a meeting took place between Fox and Bedford, which lasted for three hours. The former reported to Newcastle that his hopes of securing the new recruit for the Government were shaken. Bedford took the view that the treaties should not have been made. But as things were, he was still undecided whether it was right "to censure and obstruct them in Parliament." <sup>2</sup> A visit from Hardwicke three days later did not alter the situation.

By November 7, the atmosphere had begun to lighten. The draft address from the Commons had been returned from Woburn approved by Bedford, and Rigby had pledged himself to vote for it.<sup>3</sup> But the wording of the address from the Upper House was not so satisfactory. Bedford gave Fox a friendly hint that he might feel bound to oppose it, in order to keep himself free to act as he thought best, when the treaties came to be debated. Yet a few trifling alterations sufficed to turn his dislike into active support. He spoke in its favour in the Lords, and sent all his followers to swell the party meeting at the Cockpit, which preceded the opening of Parliament.<sup>4</sup> He remained himself firmly resolved to decline any post in the Administration under the present head of the Treasury,

<sup>1</sup> Gower to Bedford, H. Fox to Gower, October 14, 1755 ; Bedford to Gower, October 15 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 167, etc.) ; Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 18 (Add. MSS. 32,860).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, November 1, 1755.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, November 7, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,860).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, November 12, 1755.

but Gower obtained the Privy Seal, which he had refused.

Fox had his rebuffs, as well as his successes, during these negotiations. Sir Edward Walpole, young Horace's brother, refused point-blank to be coerced, notwithstanding a recent application for a commission for his son. This he believed would be forfeited in consequence, and was agreeably surprised and correspondingly grateful to Fox for keeping his promise.<sup>1</sup> Potter was more uncompromising. Fox, recollecting a like promise of long standing, strove to carry it into effect before leaving the War Office. Potter refused to accept the favour. In vain Fox pointed out that the offer was not meant as a bribe. "The truth is, that it is a pleasure to me to do a personal civility to Mr Potter, at the same time that I knew he would earnestly oppose what I hope I shall be able to support. . . . As to the situation I am in, a friend of yours can perhaps tell you why I am in it better than I can myself." But Potter remained firm, and declined the favour upon the grounds of conscience, with all the thanks which it deserved.<sup>2</sup>

It next fell to the lot of Fox, as leader of the House of Commons, to pen the customary circular letter to the supporters of the Government, urging them to be in their places at the commencement of the session. In view of the extreme importance of making an exceptional display of strength in the opening debate, Fox expressed his request in a more personal form than was usual under the circumstances. The letter read as follows :

" SIR,

" The King has declared his intention to make me Secretary of State, and I (very unworthy as I fear I am of such an undertaking) must take upon me the conduct of the House of Commons : I cannot therefore well accept

<sup>1</sup> Sir E. Walpole to H. Fox, October 7, 13, 15, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to T. Potter, October 17, 18, 1755 ; T. Potter to H. Fox, October 18, 1755.

the office till after the first day's debate, which may be a warm one. A great attendance that day of my friends will be of the greatest consequence to my future situation, and I should be extremely happy if you would for that reason show yourself among them, to the great honour of,

"Dear Sir, your etc., etc."<sup>1</sup>

One phrase in the letter, *the conduct of the House of Commons*, raised special comment and criticism in various quarters, and was long remembered against him. The Lord Chancellor thought it had a hidden meaning; and inspired the First Lord with some distrust of Fox's motive for omitting the more customary words.<sup>2</sup> Was it not a hint, he suggested, that Fox was resolved to control the secret-service money and dispose of employments? But Newcastle, on second thoughts, gulped down his fears. Fox's conduct had been exemplary up to date. "He acts openly, fairly and I think cordially."<sup>3</sup> Even Hardwicke could only grumble in reply that it was early days to form a judgment.

Leicester House also took exception to the tone of Fox's letter, which Sir George Lee described as "presumptuous." The Princess had been beside herself with fury at the news of Fox's promotion, and her followers were on the look-out for any mistake on his part.<sup>4</sup> The letter was made a subject for debate in the House of Commons soon after the commencement of the session.

On the night before Parliament was opened, Fox mustered his supporters in the Lower House at the Cockpit. Two hundred and eighty-seven members were present, "which was, by near 30, a greater number than ever met

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 421.

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,860). The usual formula read, "The conduct of His Majesty's affairs in the House of Commons."

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 4, 1755 (Add. MSS. 35,415).

<sup>4</sup> She had been *mal traitée*, she told her secretary, Cresset. She believed that the promotion had been designed for the last twelve months (Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 28, 1755. Add. MSS. 35,415).

there before.”<sup>1</sup> Pitt, Legge, the Grenvilles and the Townshends were conspicuous by their absence. In his zeal to win support, Fox had written to Legge, asking him to sign the circular letters.<sup>2</sup> Legge declined to do so,<sup>3</sup> but promised to come and see him. This he did on October 21. Fox then ascertained that he was firmly resolved to oppose the subsidies, and equally so not to go into opposition. But he was so clearly under Pitt’s thumb, that little reliance could be placed upon his statements, however honest his motives.<sup>4</sup> In further conversation, a week later, Legge disclosed the fact that the Opposition would and could not stop at the subsidies.<sup>5</sup> Fox was right, when he sent word to Rigby, to expect such a session of Parliament as he had never seen.<sup>6</sup>

Yet Fox was content with his own situation, and the outlook for his party.

“ Everything with regard to domestic affairs go well enough. I see every day more and more reason to know that I did right, and that I could have done no otherwise. In Parliament we shall, I verily think, triumph beyond expectations. Whether, with respect to foreign affairs in Europe, we are not even in a desperate way, I dare not examine. And yet the City is afraid of peace, and I am said to be *le boutefeu de la guerre*.”<sup>7</sup>

At the Cockpit meeting, the Speaker took an opportunity of explaining his position with regard to the subsidies. After the King’s Speech and the proposed addresses had been read by Fox, who presided, he said that he understood the word *dominions*, therein employed,

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, November 12, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.). Horace Walpole gives the figures as 289 (*Letters*, iii. 365).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to H. B. Legge, October 2, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,859).

<sup>3</sup> H. B. Legge to H. Fox, October 17, 1755.

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, October 21, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, October 28, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>6</sup> R. Rigby to Bedford, August 21, 1755 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 168).

<sup>7</sup> H. Fox to Hartington, November 4, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).



to mean *British dominions*.<sup>1</sup> Unless used in that sense, it constituted a breach of the Act of Settlement. He had not made up his mind upon the question of subsidies, and should reserve his liberty to act as he thought best, when the bill reached that stage in which he was allowed to speak and vote. Fox "explained the nature of the address, and that no one was precluded that thought the measure *unwise* or *unnecessary*": while Hillsborough announced his intention of moving it on the following day, in the full belief that the word was intended to be taken in the limited sense to which the Speaker had referred.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The paragraph which he spoke of read as follows: "I have also confined my views and operations to hinder France from making new encroachments or supporting those already made; to exert our right to a satisfaction for hostilities committed in a time of profound peace; and to disappoint such designs as, from various appearances and preparations, there is reason to think have been formed against my Kingdoms and Dominions."

<sup>2</sup> Memo. by Mr West, Saturday evening (docketed November 11, 1755. Add. MSS. 32,860). This date must be a slip of the pen. Saturday was the 15th. The paper can only refer to the Cockpit meeting.

## CHAPTER XIV

ON November 13, the struggle commenced in real earnest. The address to the King was proposed and seconded by Hillsborough and O'Brien respectively, the latter a follower of Newcastle. Fox had tried hard to induce Lord George Sackville to assume one or other of those duties, and only received his definite refusal as late as the 10th. The suggestion that one of Lord Hardwicke's sons should come forward met the same fate. Barrington would have been prepared to take on the job "on a day's notice." So said Newcastle, in answer to the fear which Fox expressed, that no one would care to do it "if spoke too late."<sup>1</sup>

Hillsborough proved himself an unfortunate selection. He presupposed opposition, and, instead of disguising, drew attention to the "tendency of the treaties to a Hanoverian measure." "On the supposed contents of the treaties the opposition was principally carried on, but particularly the reasonings pointed against the Russian treaty, as being a measure introductive of a war upon the Continent, which was argued to be ruinous in our present circumstances, and that it would provoke instead of bridling the K. of Prussia."<sup>2</sup> The debate was "long and uninterrupted: a great deal of it extremely fine." Grenville and Murray especially distinguished themselves. Fox's friend, William Gerard Hamilton, spoke for the first time, and "was at once perfection." His reputation as a parliamentary speaker dates from this effort.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, November 7, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,860).

<sup>2</sup> W. Ellis to Hartington, November 15, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.). Walpole is the printed authority for this debate (*Memoirs*, i. 407; *Letters*, iii. 365-71).

But Pitt's speech was the chief feature of the evening. He rose after one o'clock, and spoke for over an hour and a half, "with scarce a bad sentence." "Pitt's was an unequal performance; some parts very fine, others languid." Ellis wrote:

"When Mr P. came to speak, he pointed some parts of his speech and made it more personal than I expected. He said that out of the declaration in favour of Hanover in 1741 one minister had sprung up, and, like the grass, had flourished, withered and had been cut up, as it were in a day. That he suspected from this declaration another minister might spring up, but he would prophesy that this measure would hang like a millstone about his neck till it sunk him into the contempt of the people. As to the wording of the motion, he said there appeared plainly more hands in it than one, and bore the marks from whence the different parts sprung. That one part intimated or rather whispered the object; that the other spoke out and precipitately dashed into the matter; which put him in mind of the manner in which he was affected, when he was abroad, upon seeing the junction of the Rhône and the Saône. The latter, smooth, gentle, slow and at the same time not deep; the former, rapid, violent and bearing down all before it. That the difference of their natures were perceivable long after their conjunction, their waters scarce mixing, though running the same course, till at length the violence of the Rhône absorbed, swallowed and hurried away with it the waters of the gentler stream. Long may this ministerial, well-adapted conjunction last to their mutual enjoyment and happiness, and to the surprise and satisfaction of all beholders."<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the speech, he said that he felt no rancour, only pity, for the man at the head of this measure—the new Secretary of State. The latter replied to him in few words, being "extremely fatigued." "The debate was closed by *our friend* with great temper and brevity, yet with firmness; and I think wisely abstained from falling

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis to Hartington, November 15.

into personal repartee. But he has since told me that his prudence was in part owing to his having forgot the rough expression to which he did design when he rose to have said something."<sup>1</sup> Pitt complained, said Fox, of the unwarranted use of the King's name, yet no one used it as often as he. And why was he so anxious to know the *author*, when he proclaimed so loudly that he wished to arraign the *measure* alone?

The House sat till past 5 o'clock in the morning. The amendment was divided, and the vote taken upon two points separately. On the motion to omit the direct assurances of protection to Hanover, the Opposition were beaten by 311 to 105: and on that to cut out a sentence, which was said to approve the subsidies indirectly, by 289 to 98. Bedford's party uniformly voted with the Government; as did Egmont, much to the surprise of Leicester House.

After the debate Fox asked Pitt for an explanation of his simile. "Who is the Rhône?" "Is that a fair question?" replied Pitt. "Why," said Fox, "as you have said so much that I did not desire to hear, you may tell me one thing that I would hear: am I the Rhône, or Lord Granville?" "You are Granville," was all Pitt would answer.<sup>2</sup>

On November 14, Fox received the seals.<sup>3</sup> The writ for his election was moved upon the same day. On the 20th, Pitt, Legge and Grenville received notice of dismissal from their respective posts. It was clearly impossible to retain them in office after their recent show of insubordination; nor could they expect different treatment. James Grenville resigned his seat at the Board of Trade next day. Charles Townshend also offered to do so, but

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis to Hartington, November 15.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 418. Temple thought the Rhône meant Cumberland, Granville and Fox; the Saône, Newcastle, Hardwicke and Murray. It is more probable that Fox and Newcastle were individually designated.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 15, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,860).



was told by Pitt that he wished no one to give up office on account of him. But subsequently a violent speech against Newcastle in Committee on the treaties led to his immediate removal.

On the 21st, the day of Fox's first levee, George Townshend, who was embarking on opposition to his uncle, Newcastle, from personal enmity to Fox, moved for a call of the House, and introduced the subject of the new Secretary of State's recent circular letter.<sup>1</sup> He animadverted on the extraordinary procedure of attaching a personal invitation to the customary ministerial summons.

"He produced a letter from an enterprising minister which he read and commented upon, in which there was this expression, viz., that His Majesty had committed the *conduct of the House of Commons* to his care, &c. Mr Fox took occasion to observe, 1st, that it was usual, when a complaint was made to the House of any thing written, that the *informer* produced the original paper; in the next place, that he confessed that he had written to some of the most considerable gentlemen of the House, those whom he thought his friends, an account of the station to which H.M. had advanced him. That some of those letters had been copied by his secretary, who had made a mistake by omitting a few words, but if he had been guilty of a negligence or imprudence in his expression in a letter written to a friend, he did not desire to be cured of it; as he should not wish to live when he must weigh the words he put on paper to a friend. But that he was ready to own one great imprudence, that he had certainly written to some one who was not his friend, but that he had not been so imprudent to send such a

<sup>1</sup> The reason for George Townshend's antipathy to the Duke of Cumberland and Fox is related in Glover's *Memoirs* (p. 71). He had applied for leave of absence from his regiment, shortly after his election to Parliament as member for Norfolk, in order to attend certain engagements in his constituency. His request was refused by the Secretary-at-War, and also by the Duke, to whom he made a personal application. Furious at the favouritism involved in their refusal to grant what he believed a supporter of the court would have obtained without difficulty, he resigned his commission.

letter to *that gentleman*.<sup>1</sup> That he was willing to suppose that the copy had not been given with an intent that such a use should be made of it, and that, however it might be given, he might be allowed to say, that *all the exactness of a gentleman* had not been observed with regard to a letter. That he would not be supposed to mean the offensive import which was ascribed to the words, for so far was he from answering for the conduct of so great a body, that he would not answer for the conduct of that one individual, the worthy gentleman who had made the motion, for a week."<sup>2</sup>

The matter then dropped, after a few remarks from Beckford, who excused Fox's action. Men in high offices, he said, are always imprudent. "He had a great regard for the gentleman in question. He has abilities; the rest have not; we have a better chance with a man of sense."<sup>3</sup>

On the same afternoon, Welbore Ellis, now one of the Lords of the Admiralty, moved for 50,000 seamen, and included among them 9,129 marines. No objection was raised, and the proposition seemed agreed, when up rose Pitt, and scathingly condemned the policy which had reduced the British sea service to so low an ebb.

"He took occasion (tho' not to the purpose) to animadvert on the whole conduct of the Administration during the whole summer, and the long neglect of our Colonies preceding that time which had bred this war; and took occasion to say some smart things on the *Ministry*. Our friend<sup>4</sup> replied, and among other things lamented the unhappy situation of His M., who had *no man of sense or virtue* who approached him, and that the *only* man who could shew him where those necessary qualities were in a transcendent degree had not the privilege of conversing with him. Here the other interrupted him, and observed

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Turner had given Townshend this letter. Although he owed his seat at Oxford to Fox's exertions, he had said, "I am surprised he writes to me: I don't know the gentleman."

<sup>2</sup> W. Ellis to Hartington, November 22, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 422.

<sup>4</sup> Fox.

how irregular it was to take notice of words spoken in a former debate, but denied positively the having used them in the manner quoted ; but said he had reason to believe that he had been assassinated by strokes of court stilettos, though he declared he did not mean the gentleman who had spoken last in that observation, it not belonging to his make or complexion to make use of such methods ; but that he supposed he had mistaken his words. That he felt effects which led him to believe that others, who had not mistaken, had misrepresented his words. (N.B. He had been turned out that morning.) He then glanced upon the struggle for power, and intimated the trials which had been made with him during the last summer, and used some expressions which induced the House to believe that the office of Secretary had been offered him, to which he had said, No.

“ Our friend, in reply, said that he would appeal to the gentleman’s own breast, whether his present situation was owing to his struggle for the shadow of power which, he said, he had gotten. That he well knew how retired and how happy he had passed his time at Holland House, thinking himself out of the question. That not till the end of the summer had any application been made to him, and, as his opinion coincided with the measures, he had obeyed *commands*, and would support what his opinion dictated with firmness and the best of his ability, such as it was. The Attorney-G., afterwards observing that he had never heard of the offer intimated by the honble gentleman, Mr P. interrupted him and said that he was misunderstood, for he did not mean that the place had been offered him, but the *measure* had been proposed to him to which he had said, No, many months before the gentleman had been thought of. Thus upon the whole the affair ended at about 7 o’clock, without any division.” <sup>1</sup>

This dispute was the most acrimonious and the most

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis to Hartington, November 22, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.). This account of the debate corresponds in general terms with Walpole (*Memoirs*, i. 422), though the sequence of the various points raised by the two men differs. Ellis’s narrative does not sufficiently bring out the defence made by Fox of Pelham’s measures, and his reference to the latter’s love of economy when no actual necessity for extraordinary expenditure existed.



prolonged which had yet taken place between the rivals. Holdernesse, judging from Fox's own account, thought that the latter had acted "roundly and fairly." He added, "He cries up Murray to the stars."<sup>1</sup> Fox increased his prestige by the great control which he had maintained over his feelings under serious provocation. Pitt, on the other hand, had weakened his position by a reference to offers which he was unable to substantiate. Fox and Murray for once scored heavily all along the line. "On the debate upon the fleet, Mr Fox and the Attorney-General got a complete victory over Mr Pitt. There was a good deal of altercation between Pitt and Fox, and I may say the latter did very well, and had the better of his antagonist."<sup>2</sup>

One of Fox's first duties, as Secretary for the Southern Department, was to deliver a message from the King, on November 28, asking for a grant to alleviate the distress in Portugal. The occasion for this unwonted beneficence was an appalling earthquake, which had taken place in Lisbon on the first day of the month. He read to the Commons a letter from Sir Benjamin Keene, the British Minister in Madrid, describing the magnitude of the disaster. £100,000 was at once voted for the sufferers, part of which was sent over in grain and flour, and in beef from Ireland.

On December 2, a further debate took place upon naval matters. Lord Pulteney, Lord Bath's only son, brought in a bill to encourage recruiting for the navy, by giving all prizes to the captors. A like measure had been introduced by his father at the commencement of the previous war; and had then passed. It was now opposed by ministers on the grounds that the occasion was inappropriate; and was shelved, although timed only to take effect upon the declaration of war. During the afternoon Fox and Pitt recommenced their altercations.

<sup>1</sup> Holdernesse to Newcastle, November 21, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,861).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hartington, November 29, 1755 (*ibid.*).



Indeed, few days passed at this time on which they did not come to blows. The discussions, which had opened with the subject of pressing, veered by degrees to the relations between England and France. Fox replied to a "pathetic speech," as he called it, from Grenville. He said that to pass the bill would be tantamount to a declaration of war: it would give France the very opportunity which she desired of branding England as the aggressor. The expediency of the bill turned on the period at which it was to pass. It was as inadvisable *now* as it might be advisable in a few months' time. This had been Sir Robert Walpole's view of the previous act. Fox concluded his remarks with a panegyric upon his former patron, denied the venality of his Parliaments, and contended that his influence arose from the rectitude of his measures and his ability in explaining them to the House. Pitt followed him, and enlarged upon the word *now* in an adverse sense. He had always, he said, spoken of Walpole with respect—after he had resigned his office. The source of that influence was clearly proved by the Enquiry, "stifled as it was." Should Fox ever attain to Sir Robert's power, he hoped that he would use it with the same moderation. Murray also spoke, and Legge closed the debate with an expression of his veneration for Walpole's memory.<sup>1</sup> The bill, when reintroduced at a later date, became law.

On the 5th, the army came under consideration. The new Secretary-at-War, Lord Barrington, moved the Estimates for 34,263 men, an increase of 15,000. Hardwicke had written to Newcastle, on November 22, that he did not consider the augmentation necessary at the moment, since so little progress had been made with previous orders.<sup>2</sup> Yet it was agreed to without a division. Little opposition was manifested; for, as in the navy debates, the discussion turned upon the past rather than upon

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, xv. 544, etc.; *Walpole's Memoirs*, i. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Add. MSS. 32,861.

the future. Pitt deplored the recent inactivity of the Ministry, and sketched the terrible danger of the country, exposed to invasion without adequate defence. The King's Speech in 1754 had been calculated to lull men into a "fallacious dream of repose." Ministers had failed to warn the King of the chances which they were taking. "He wanted to call this country out of that enervate state, that 20,000 men from France shake it. The maxims of government were degenerated, not our natives." He extolled the patriotism of those noblemen who had given up their leisure in time of stress, and had saved the state by raising regiments.<sup>1</sup>

This was a direct cut at Fox, and artfully conceived, for it recalled recollections of a former difference of opinion between him and Bedford. The latter had raised a regiment, and had persuaded the King to allow officers to retain their rank permanently, a course to which the Secretary-at-War took strong exception at the time. In his reply, however, Fox was now able to congratulate Bedford on the single-mindedness of his conduct. Others had not been so praiseworthy, said he, instancing the Duke of Montagu's behaviour, which had appeared specially conceived to fill his pockets. Would that Pitt had made this speech earlier, "when we were asleep, and before France had awakened us." He would surely have remembered it, had he done so. "I am not apt to forget his speeches."<sup>2</sup> He implored Pitt to devise means to quicken recruiting, and challenged him to produce a Militia Bill, if any workable scheme could be framed.

Pitt reiterated his remark that he had been deluded. Yet he acquitted Fox from any responsibility in the positive assertions of Newcastle that there would be no war. He had not then been admitted to his Grace's confidence. But now the danger was at hand: no longer could the gravity of the situation be concealed. Nugent,

<sup>1</sup> In 1746. See *ante*, p. 116; Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 437.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 440. Compare also *Bedford Corres.*, ii. 179.

Lord George Sackville, Beckford and other speakers continued the debate. Walpole describes it as "a day of rodomontade."

Pitt took an early opportunity of meeting Fox's taunts. Upon a motion by George Townshend a few days later for the consideration of a Militia Bill, he produced a scheme of his own, part of which was afterwards adapted to suit the measure. The discussion of its clauses was spread over many days: but as the Ministry withdrew from the debates, and as the act failed to pass the Upper House, we need not trouble ourselves with details.<sup>1</sup>

On the 10th, the consideration of the treaties was resumed in both Houses. In the Lords, Temple moved to censure the subsidies; Chesterfield defended them. Bedford spoke in favour of, and Halifax in opposition to them. The debate was stormy, and their Lordships sat until ten in the evening. The House of Commons rose about the same time. The fun had there been fast and furious. Lord Barrington had moved to refer the treaties to the Committee of Supply.

"Mr Potter oppos'd referring them, on account of their being illegally concluded, as being made for the defence of Hanover without the consent of Parliament, in violation and defiance of the Act of Settlement; and charg'd, besides, the payment of the Hessian levy money in the summer as a criminal misapplication of the public money; and, without entering into the expediency or tendency of the treaties, thought for these reasons the House should not give them so much countenance as to refer them. We try'd, but in vain, to stop this debate, and go into Committee. The debate went on, in which Hume Campbell<sup>2</sup> (gain'd, between yr Grace and me, at much too dear

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 447.

<sup>2</sup> Hon. Alexander Hume-Campbell (*d.* 1760), brother of Hugh, third Earl of Marchmont, a lawyer of some repute, and a former associate of Pitt. He had been enticed over by Newcastle to his side, with an offer of preferment. "Eloquent, acute, abusive, corrupt and insatiable," are epithets applied to him by Walpole.



a rate) signaliz'd himself in an exceeding good speech. But he very unguardedly said that a member should not inveigh against, but accuse a minister, and if he could not make good his charge, should suffer ; and hop'd that these eternal invectives would not only be restrain'd but punish'd. Murray spoke admirably, keeping closely to the point, and unanswerably. Pitt fell on both, but us'd the latter with great respect. As to Hume Campbell's doctrine, he treated it as tending to destroy all liberty of speech, privilege of the House, and fundamental security of this Constitution. He quoted what Sr John Elliot had said against the D. of Buckingham in K. James the First's time, and that even in that reign he could not be punish'd for it, tho' there was not wanting then a *servile, wretched* lawyer, who was ready to flatter the minister at the expense of liberty, a mercenary, miserable, slavish lawyer, &c., &c., &c. ; and after talking ten minutes thus, he would no longer, he said, speak in the third person but to the gentleman himself, and then lash'd him for ten minutes more in the most scurrilous as well as fine language I ever heard. In short, my Lord, we have heard a good deal, but believe me this went many bars' length beyond any abuse you ever heard.

"Hume Campbell hung down his head, did not even offer to get up, and left me to answer for him. I then found the advantage of not having ever been in opposition. I shall not write you my own speech if I could, but I am told I spoke as well as ever I did in my life, and, without any scurrility, hurt Mr Pitt, I believe, exceedingly. I desir'd abuse might go on with impunity, after it had gone on for so many years together with impunity against the great Sr R. Walpole, and since that against another great man. I neither saw nor foresaw a minister who could say, 'Sr R. Walpole might, but I must *not* be slander'd with impunity.' With the other great man (Ld Granville), I combin'd the subject of declamation against him, Hanover troops, and the endeavour to make the fatal distinction, if it had prevailed, of Englishman and Hanoverian, which had been attempted again without success this summer. But the eyes of the people were open'd, by the repeated instances by which declaimers had shewn the real views and designs for which they



made their declamation. I therefore wish'd him to go on, and assur'd him I heard his invectives with admiration, and that they were an amusement; and in the present disposition of the people and their representatives, it must be the ministers' own faults if they felt any uneasiness from them. In the argument (which he is not good at), we had much the better of it."<sup>1</sup>

The faithful legions of the court prevailed, and passed the motion by 318 to 126. Two days later the subject was further discussed in Committee. Fox wrote a short account of the incidents of the evening.

"We were in the Committee on these treatys again last night till 3 in the morning, when we divided 289 against 121. It was a tedious and bad debate. Ch. Townshend made a most outrageous but very clever speech, abusing ev'ry body, but above all his uncle, the D. of Newcastle. G. Townshend, in a very bad speech, was entirely at his Grace, and call'd upon Lord Granby, who spoke better than you can imagine and did himself and us much good. Ld G. Sackville spoke very well indeed. Mr Pitt, more moderate than he has been of late but well, complain'd of what I had said the night before; and tho' it was not all abuse, there was a good deal, and he made it necessary for me to speak at  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour after 2."<sup>2</sup>

Walpole tells us that Fox had little to say on the subject of the treaties. "His point was to keep Pitt at bay."

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, December 11, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.). The third Duke, Lord Hartington's father, had died on the 5th. Fox's narrative closely resembles the general tenor of Walpole's, which is the printed authority for the debate.

Compare Ellis's account of Fox's speech (W. Ellis to Devonshire, December 20, 1755): "H. F. very judiciously took up the defence of H. C. with great spirit, but he did not defend his doctrine. On the contrary, he said he heard with great composure, with some degree of pleasure, the several figures of rhetoric, the numerous periods, and variety of language used in invective; and even when he should be the subject, he should consider them but as matter of his amusement. The Scotch are all in love with him, and he certainly did himself honour that day."

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, December 13, 1755 (Devonshire MSS.).

Yet he attacked him as vigorously as heretofore, and spoke of the treasonable pamphlets and songs of the former Opposition. He would never forgive any man, "who had a heart to conceive, a head to contrive, and a hand to execute so much mischief." "Pitt professes," said he, "to be proud of acting with some here: I am proud of acting with so many. But is it the part of a wise man, because he wishes Hanover separated from England, to act as if it was separate already?" To all this he added some sarcasm at the expense of Charles Townshend, who had laid claim to an intimate knowledge of the King of Prussia's secret counsels.

On the 15th, the Report stage was taken; and subsequently both treaties were approved by the House. Pitt again expressed himself at great length, but on this occasion his rival seems to have refrained from any response.

At the conclusion of these debates, the House adjourned over Christmas. The passage of the treaties, due largely to the efforts of Fox, had lifted a weight of care from Newcastle's shoulders. He now had leisure to conclude the changes in his Government, and to deal with vacancies caused by the recent dismissals and resignations. One post only, the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, had been filled without delay. The question of the rest had been postponed, in order that those who were fortunate enough to be selected might seek re-election during the holidays. By this means the voting power of the court had been maintained intact.

Sir George Lyttelton had accepted the offer of the Exchequer without demur. His devotion to Newcastle had blinded him to his own incapacity. His gifts rather befitted him for a professorship of literature than for a responsible seat at the Treasury board. He was even ignorant of the rudimentary axioms of finance, and was reputed to be unable to work out an ordinary sum in arithmetic. His former friendship with the Grenville

brotherhood made the selection more noticeable. He was clambering to power "over the ruins of his old friends."<sup>1</sup> His intimacy with Pitt had come to an abrupt conclusion twelve months before; and was only to be renewed some ten years later. Pitt and Temple had resented his attempt to negotiate on their behalf after Pelham's death; and an inane attempt to reconcile Bedford and Newcastle, in November 1754, completed the breach.<sup>2</sup> Newcastle was, no doubt, seeking to reward him for these misdirected efforts, and to cause annoyance to the departing band. But in reality he was erecting a target for their shafts, a mark openly exposed to their ridicule.

Further changes and appointments were notified in due course. Lord Dupplin and Lord Darlington succeeded Pitt as Joint-Paymasters. Dodington, as we have already seen, followed George Grenville as Treasurer of the Navy. His latest change of party was as ill received by the public as by his old associates.<sup>3</sup> Lord Bateman and Mr Edgecumbe, friends of Fox, became Lords of the Admiralty in place of Charles Townshend and Welbore Ellis. The latter divided the emoluments of the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland with Lord Cholmondeley and Lord Sandwich. He had been destined, indeed named, for a seat at the Treasury board, but "endeavoured underhand" to avoid acceptance of the post, and was much relieved "when this expedient was suggested."<sup>4</sup> Sandwich had been disappointed of the Chief Justiceship in Eyre, which was given to Lord Sandys, a relict of past Administrations.

And now the crisis was passed, the First Lord plucked

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 419.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 358.

<sup>3</sup> "More people are angry at Dodington's success than you can ever imagine" (H. Fox to Ilchester, December 20, 1755).

<sup>4</sup> W. Ellis to Devonshire, February 3, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.). The public looked upon it as a disappointment to Ellis, and supposed that Newcastle had scored a point off Fox by excluding his friend from the Treasury. See also Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 484.

up fresh courage. "The Duke of Newcastle and his coadjutor, Mr Fox," wrote Walpole, "squabble twice for agreeing once."<sup>1</sup> Fox found the greatest difficulty in securing the ratification of the promises to his five nominees. He was obliged to speak his mind clearly in a letter dated December 18.<sup>2</sup> Hamilton was so uneasy, Fox wrote, and was so flattered by the other side, that a rupture was to be feared. Wynne's job must be done next day, "else what will become of me?" Hamilton was finally appeased with a seat at the Board of Trade, Newcastle, Bedford, Hardwicke and Fox each nominating one member. Hillsborough became Treasurer of the Chambers; George Selwyn, Paymaster of the Board of Works. Sir Francis Dashwood was offered employment, but proved too closely bound to Leicester House to accept. Hume-Campbell was consoled for his rough handling in the Commons with the Lord Registrarship of Scotland. To make way for him, Lord Lothian was removed, after a tedious negotiation in which Fox took a leading part; and received a pension of £1,200 as compensation.

The cost of the changes amounted to nearly £8,000 a year: so great was Newcastle's disregard of public money when his power was at stake.

There remain only Bedford and his followers. The Duke would accept nothing for himself, and thereby gained great commendation. Fox wrote to Newcastle, "He is just what you would have him, as much Lord Chancellor's as if he had never been out of place, and with regard to your Grace, exactly what you should and do wish him." But he urged that Bedford's support should be assured through the medium of his brother-in-law, Lord Gower. "If you give Lord Gower a Cabinet Councillor's place, you oblige both him and the D. of Bedford. If a less, you oblige Lord Gower, but obliging

<sup>1</sup> H. Walpole to Sir H. Mann (*Letters*, iii. 380):

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle (Add. MSS. 32,861).



him separately from the D. of Bedford is not obliging even him effectually." <sup>1</sup> Fox had his way in the end. Lord Gower became Privy Seal. Marlborough, who had resigned that post some months before, was made Master-General of the Ordnance, displacing Lord Ligonier, a far more deserving officer.

Rigby, another of Bedford's dependants, was satisfied for the moment with a seat at the Board of Trade. Fox's letter to Newcastle on this subject is characteristic of his zealous solicitude for the interests of his friends.

"I have been infinitely uneasy since the hint your Grace gave me at court yesterday relative to Rigby. Don't think I take what your Grace said ill. On the contrary, I am so sure I have no reason to do so, that I am convinced you will contrive something right for him, when you know that a disappointment in this would *afflict* me beyond measure. You will always find infinite use, and, if you please, thorough satisfaction in Rigby, and Bedford House will not be as it should be without it; but I build my hopes on the infinite obligation it would be if done, and the *grief*, if it cannot be done, to yours, etc." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, December 12, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,861).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER XV

PARLIAMENT reassembled on January 13. Three days later a treaty of the utmost importance was signed between Great Britain and Prussia. The result was to revolutionise the balance of power in Europe. King George had engineered the Russian treaty with a view to preserve Hanover from the attacks of his nephew, Frederick. His policy was speedily justified, though in an unexpected direction. For the future Hanover was to rest secure, under the protection of the very power from whom she had had most to fear. The King of Prussia's isolation threw him into his uncle's arms. By the Convention of Westminster, as the new arrangement was termed, German territory as a whole was to be secured against foreign invasion.

Early in 1755, the foundations of the British alliance with Austria had commenced to totter. The refusal of the Queen-Empress to guarantee the integrity of Hanover and to secure her own provinces in the Low Countries from the possibility of French assaults had shaken Newcastle's confidence in her good intentions. She, on the other hand, disappointed that the English Government was unwilling to guard her from Prussian aggression, began to make up to France, her traditional foe. Kaunitz was now chief Minister in Austria; and to Kaunitz, a former Ambassador in Paris and a lover of everything French, can the initiation of this new departure be clearly traced. The court of Versailles, convinced that the renewal of war with England was unavoidable, was by no means indisposed to a new connection. Besides, their under-

standing with Prussia was weakening daily, strained by the conduct of Frederick, whose openly expressed contempt for Louis XV and his mistress, Madame de Pompadour, had introduced a personal element into the relations between the two countries.

Newcastle does not seem to have foreseen the likelihood of a convention between Austria and France, but his advances to Russia precipitated the crisis. Fox was requested in November, by Michel, the Prussian Minister in London, to furnish him with a copy of the treaty with the Czarina. He passed on the demand to Holderness, the Northern Secretary, who complied, after the papers had been laid before Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Frederick then perceived the ambiguity of his position. He saw himself alone, surrounded by a host of enemies, and hastened to conclude the only alliance which remained open to him. But he had other designs in view as well as the defence of his dominions, and was still plotting offensive schemes against Austria and Saxony. This fact, Newcastle had also failed to grasp. Still less could he be expected to fathom the malignity and hatred with which Maria Theresa regarded the conqueror of Silesia. And so his Grace's hint to Austria—a suggestion that she should turn her attention to repelling French aggression, since all danger from Prussia had passed—was received in the same spirit as his assurances of England's interference should Frederick again set foot on his neighbour's territory. Austria would not hear of alliance with Prussia, and was already in negotiation with France. The Treaty of Versailles, concluded between them on May 1, 1756, foreshadowed the partition of Prussian territory, as well as the neutrality of Austria in the coming conflict with England and the probable acquisition by France of territory in Brabant and Flanders.

The news of the Convention of Westminster came as a disagreeable surprise to the Russians, who had looked

<sup>1</sup> Holderness to Newcastle, November 21, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,861).

on their recent alliance as a means of obtaining some future addition to their western boundaries. Count Bestuchev, the Prime Minister, did not actually renounce the treaty with Great Britain, but it became a dead letter. Indeed, at one time, Hanbury-Williams, now Ambassador at St Petersburg, had much difficulty in keeping the peace. He succeeded, however, in pacifying the Empress Elizabeth, who occupied the throne ; and persuaded her, though allied to Austria and France, to refrain from any hostile move against the King of Prussia unless he took the initiative. By this proviso the British Government believed that they would avert the threatened conflict. But again they misjudged Frederick, who was in reality only waiting an opportunity for striking the first blow. Poland and Saxony had recently joined the confederation against him, and Sweden was soon to follow suit. To move, and to move quickly, seemed his best hope of overcoming the dangers which were besetting him. Hurling an army of 60,000 men into Saxony in August, he overran that country and captured Dresden. There he retired into winter quarters, after worsting an Austrian army under Marshal Brown, which had been sent to the Elector's assistance. This was the commencement of the Seven Years' War. The Convention of Westminster had failed to preserve peace ; but Hanover, at least, was safe for the present from invasion.

In the meanwhile the tension between England and France was steadily growing more apparent. The latter made one more attempt to proffer the olive-branch, before taking the almost inevitable step of declaring war. At the end of December, Rouillé, the French Foreign Minister, sent a memorial to M. Bonnac, the French Ambassador at the Hague.<sup>1</sup> He delivered it to Colonel Yorke, the British representative, with the request that it should be transmitted to King George. Yorke forwarded the document on December 26 to Fox, as Secretary for the

<sup>1</sup> Add. MSS. 15,875.



Southern Department. It expressed the strong desire of the French for peace, but spoke of the recent occurrences in the Channel as "*pirateries*" and "*brigandages*." The immediate restoration of the captured vessels was demanded, and was made a condition for the willingness of the court of Versailles to treat on the subject of American territory. A refusal would be looked upon "*comme déclaration de guerre la plus authentique*."<sup>1</sup>

"Lord Granville says no answer but a declaration of war can be given to Rouillé's *Mémoire*, which, when you consider that it is addressed directly to the King, is insolent to a great degree. All agree a war unavoidable; but Ld Chancellor and the D. of Newcastle are for a little paper war first, for which I shall, I doubt not, receive orders this forenoon."<sup>2</sup>

On the following day, Fox sent Devonshire further particulars :

"I am to write to Mr Rouillé, acknowledging to have received and laid the memorial before H.M., and to acquaint Mr Rouillé that the immediate and entire restitution of ships, etc., therein demanded as a preliminary condition, is not to be complied with; H.M. having taken no step but what the hostilities first committed by France and a due regard to his own honour, to the rights and possessions of his Crown and the security of his Kingdom, made requisite, just and necessary. It was the unanimous opinion that so offensive a memorial deserved no answer from the K. directly; and that it would be shewing too much regard to it, to enter into a recapitulation of facts and reasonings by way of justification."<sup>3</sup>

Henceforward French preparations were pushed forward with feverish haste. The ports of Dunkirk, Brest and Toulon displayed unwonted activity. Marshal Belleisle was appointed "*Commandant de toutes les côtes*

<sup>1</sup> H. Walpole to Sir H. Mann, January 25, 1756 (*Letters*, iii. 392).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, "Private," January 7, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>3</sup> Devonshire MSS. Fox was quoting directly from the Cabinet minute.

de France depuis Dunquerque inclusivement jusqu'à Bayonne." Of these proceedings the British Government had two special sources of information. Copies of the confidential reports from Bunge, the Swedish Minister in Paris, to his chief in Stockholm, Höpken, were obtained by some underhand means. The inestimable value of this intimate correspondence can be judged by the excessive degree of cordiality which existed between the two countries. It was supplemented by letters from an anonymous informer living at Versailles.<sup>1</sup> These enabled Newcastle to gauge pretty clearly the quarters from which danger might be expected. He was warned that a descent on the shores of England and Ireland was in contemplation, and that an attack upon the isle of Minorca had been seriously discussed. The French fleet was also to be largely augmented, and strong reinforcements to be despatched to America.

The first fruits of the treaty with Prussia now became apparent. British interests were, in fact, again being subordinated to those of Hanover. That province was now invulnerable; and, in consequence, the whole resources of France were to be directed against Great Britain.

The feeling of panic which affected Newcastle and the Cabinet, as a result of these negotiations, was reflected in the mind of the public. Fears of invasion ran like wildfire through the country. The forces at the disposal of the Government were as ill fitted to repel a hostile force as in the worst months of 1745. "We first engaged in a war, and then began to prepare ourselves," wrote Waldegrave. His dictum cannot be gainsaid. The dilatoriness of Newcastle and his colleagues had reduced the nation to the depths of ignominy and impotence.

The seriousness of the situation seemed in no way exaggerated, if the coast of Great Britain was in reality the objective of French schemes. By February Belleisle

<sup>1</sup> Both series are to be found among the Newcastle Papers at the British Museum. Cressener was the man's name (Holland House MSS.).



STEPHEN FOX.





had 60,000 men under arms, scattered along the sea-board of France. How to meet these, and still to maintain the struggle in America at high pressure, was a difficult problem. Orders for the ten new battalions approved in the Army Estimates had been given early in January—too late to be of use in the present crisis. England was utterly denuded of reliable troops.

“At present, if we have secur’d the metropolis, it is all. There is not in all the West or the North of England a single soldier. . . . Recruits come in very slowly. . . . If a landing of any considerable number of men is effected in either Britain or Ireland, the one island must certainly immediately assist the other. But America must not be given up, to avoid danger incurr’d only on account of America.”<sup>1</sup>

For the difficulty of obtaining men at such a juncture, a recent instance of the bad faith of the Government was largely responsible. During the winter, when rumours of invasion were in the air, it was suggested that noblemen should use their influence in the counties to gain recruits for the army. The scheme proved completely successful. Among others Lord Ilchester and Lord Digby, in Somersetshire, raised a complement of farmers’ sons, who enlisted on the understanding that they should not be employed abroad. When, to their dismay, it was subsequently decided to despatch the regiment to Gibraltar, many of the men had to be driven on board the transports. This flagrant violation of public faith created much stir, for, as Walpole points out, it had seemed hardly credible that the promises of the brother and nephew of a Secretary of State would not have been more closely respected. The responsibility for this breach of contract rested entirely with Cumberland, and throws a lurid light on the methods of his War Office administration. “The Duke of Cumberland would send the regiment to Gibraltar,” wrote Fox nine years later, when the scandal

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, January 31, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

had been raked up in the course of an election at Wells. "I begged, lamented, and do to this moment lament it."<sup>1</sup> Walpole quotes a similar instance after the Rebellion, for which he too appears to hold Cumberland directly to blame.

And so, in their inability to defend British soil with British arms, the Cabinet turned to the Continent for aid. Holland, under the Barrier Treaty of 1709, had engaged to provide 6,000 troops for that purpose, if the Protestant succession was in danger. But on this occasion she turned a deaf ear to Newcastle's appeal. The present quarrel between France and England, said Dutch statesmen, was essentially an American matter; and besides England was clearly the aggressor in the struggle.

Valuable time was thus wasted in this correspondence, which Fox, Granville and Anson had all prophesied would prove futile.<sup>2</sup> The King, therefore, only informed Parliament as late as March 23, that, besides other designs for augmentation and defence, he had requisitioned the body of Hessians, who under the recent treaty were at his immediate disposal, to defend the shores of England against invasion. His message was presented to the Houses respectively by Holderness and Fox; and, though received with some murmurs, the suggested reply was not opposed.

"Our addresses pass'd unanimously, but that in our House occasion'd talk that has lasted till now, 7 o'clock. Hanover troops were mentioned, spoke against by the Opposition, and call'd for by our friends. Whether there will be a motion for them or no, I know not yet. Ld George Sackville mention'd the dangerous state of Ireland, and was therefore very glad to see the advice given at the close of our address.<sup>3</sup> And the whole House seemed to applaud it with him."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holland to P. Taylor, October 19, 1765.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 30.

<sup>3</sup> "To desire His Majesty to augment his forces in Ireland if he thinks fit."

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, "Private," March 23, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

Four days later, Fox wrote again: "I believe 8,000 Hanover troops will be address'd for Monday,<sup>1</sup> to be in lieu of 6,000 Dutch that won't come. A good exchange! But the proposal does not come from the court, but from Ld Ravensworth in the House of Lds, and Lord George Sackville (not desir'd to mention it) in the H. of Commons. I fancy Ld G. Cavendish will second Ld George Sackville."<sup>2</sup> But although the motions emanated from independent sources, the principle had the full support of the Ministry. The facility with which Parliament had accepted the Hessians was an incentive to go one better, and to profit by the occasion. Newcastle was to give his final decision on the morning of the debate, whether Sackville should ask for 10 or 12 battalions of Hanoverians.<sup>3</sup>

The motion brought Pitt from a bed of sickness, which he vowed he would not have left for any less cause. He ridiculed the measure of importing foreign troops at all. It was both unnecessary and impolitic to do so. A sovereign state is that which subsists by its own strength, and not by the courtesy of its neighbours.

Notwithstanding Pitt's taunts, the address passed by a majority of nearly three to one; but he had further opportunities of arraigning the ministers and their measures, when the financial resolutions to carry the project into effect came before the House. The Hessian bargain, said he, would cost the nation £400,000 more than it would have done to raise the same troops in the country. The money which was being wasted would save Minorca or conquer America. Had England been made secure long ago, a fleet might have been safely sent to the Mediterranean. He drew attention to the unsteadiness of the

<sup>1</sup> March 29.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole (*Memoirs*, ii. 30) dates Lord George's motion April 29, while the *Parliamentary History* states that Fox moved it on March 29. From Fox's above-quoted letter it would seem probable that the latter date is the correct one, and that Lord George moved.

<sup>3</sup> Fox to Newcastle, March 27, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,864).

Administration. Individual responsibility, he said, was rapidly becoming a thing of the past in their counsels.

Did he then desire a sole minister? asked Fox, in his reply. "No," said Pitt, but he wished to see "a system and decision." He added gracefully, that were Mr Fox sole minister there would be decision enough.

Six thousand Hessian troops landed at Southampton on May 15, and over 8,000 Hanoverians at Chatham on the 20th.<sup>1</sup> War was finally declared on the 18th. A week earlier Fox brought down to the House a message from the King notifying the treaty with Prussia, and asking for supplies. A million on account was voted on the 13th, and subsequently a further £20,000 was added, to meet liabilities due to King Frederick. Beckford, George Grenville and Pitt fulminated against the proposals. For what purposes was the money to be used? asked the latter. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not answer this question, at least he might tell the House for what it should *not* be used. Misapplication of the resources of the country had left her inferior to France at every point: and so "we had a treaty with Prussia by sacrificing our rights." He bore no resentment; but if he saw a child (meaning Newcastle) driving a go-cart on a precipice, in which was seated an old King and his family, should he not take the reins out of such hands or warn the child's nurse of its danger, especially if it was "a good *shrewd* nurse" (indicating Fox)? The latter refuted Grenville's suggestion that the proposals of the Admiralty to send a force to the Mediterranean had been ignored. To have prepared the fleet as soon as Grenville alleged, was to have accomplished the impossible.

It is curious to note the unanimity with which Pitt and his friends referred to the loss of Minorca throughout these debates in the spring. The correctness of their predictions was placed to their credit by the public, when their prophecies became so unhappily fulfilled. On this

<sup>1</sup> Glover's *Memoirs*, p. 80.



occasion, Lyttelton, not Fox, was the butt of Pitt's gibes. He assailed him with a shower of invective—"the language of Billingsgate," Lyttelton called it: and the fight waxed the fiercer from their former friendship. In office, said Pitt, he feared the Chancellor's incapacity: with the pen in his hand nobody respected him more. "He was a pretty poetical genius."<sup>1</sup>

It was not the first occasion during the session on which the old comrades had crossed swords. Some bitter words had passed between them in the earlier stages of Lyttelton's first budget, which he introduced in January. In his opening speech he foreshadowed his unfitness for financial office. He spoke "well enough in general, but was strangely bewildered in figures; he stumbled over millions, and dwelt pompously upon farthings." His intention of mortgaging the Sinking Fund was received by Pitt with contemptuous disapproval. His other new proposals were, a trifling tax on cards and dice, estimated to bring in £7,000, and £30,000 to be raised by a tax on bricks and tiles. The unpopularity of this last impost was so universal that it was replaced by a twenty shilling licence on all ale-houses. Further, a tax on plate, calculated to produce an additional £30,000, was contemplated.

"Between yr Grace and me only, we have such a Chr of the Exchequer and are so fluctuating, that we have already given up one tax (upon bricks) after voting it in the Committee, and taken in its room a tax proposed by Mr Cook, of Middlesex. Yesterday, we carry'd by 129 against 120, a majority of nine only! that the Plate Tax Bill should be read a second time. Sir George is for giving that up too, and if he do's not, whether we shall carry it without the greatest difficulty and clamour I don't know. I don't think these things are of immediate, but I fear they are of very bad future, consequence. If some friends follow their own opinion against the Governt on this, others

<sup>1</sup> For these debates see Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 36; *Parliamentary History*, xv. 703; Yorke's *Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 290.

will on other, and some on all, occasions. And our Treasury has now led them into it.”<sup>1</sup>

The smallness of the Government majority upon the Plate Tax was more accidental than premeditated. The division was taken unexpectedly, owing to an error on the part of the Speaker: and the attendance was small.<sup>2</sup> The debates apparently failed to reach even a moderate standard. Legge alone shone; and by the lucidity of his arguments proved his qualification for the post which he had so recently vacated. Pitt, Fox and Hume-Campbell exposed their complete ignorance of the subject under discussion; and Lyttelton “never knew prices from duties or drawbacks from premiums.”<sup>3</sup> The opponents of the duty were encouraged in their opposition by the unmistakable hesitation of the Treasury. The proposal to collect the tax by means of the Excise officers, who in reality were to have no extraordinary powers, was magnified into an attempt to put the nobility and gentry of England under the lash of the Excise laws. Fox was hard put to it to retain the subservience of his majority in the Commons; but his efforts, ably seconded by Rigby, were crowned with success.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Newcastle would willingly have given up the tax, had not Fox, with an eye to the future, utterly refused to permit the surrender. As it was, its conditions were so far relaxed, as to reduce the yield by nearly half. But this Lyttelton was content to sacrifice, being assured of a large surplus from his new beer duties. It seems difficult in these days to comprehend excitement created by the discussion of taxes yielding *in toto* less than £100,000!

Besides these perplexities, continental and domestic, ministers had many difficulties to face with regard to America. Pitt and Fox were in constant antagonism in

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, March 18, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> W. Ellis to Devonshire, March 23, 1756 (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> Walpole's *Letters*, iii, 403.

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, March 20, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,863).

every debate. The former maintained that the Ministry were disunited, and that they were in agreement solely upon "corrupt and arbitrary measures." Fox denied this vigorously in public; and in private told his erstwhile friend that Newcastle could have had the support of certain men (hinting at the Townshends), had he not refused to sacrifice his Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup>

The reasons for George Townshend's hatred of Fox we have already noticed. Charles was not so inveterate. He left all the bitterness to his elder brother, says Walpole, and was "content with promoting confusion." As an authority on American affairs, he took a leading part on the side of the Opposition. Indeed, early in December he had moved for papers referring to French encroachments from 1713 onwards; and told Fox, who demurred, that if the Government would not supply them, he could do so, as he had them all at his disposal.<sup>2</sup>

America came under discussion in the Commons on several occasions during the month of January. We need only refer to the debate of January 23, because it dates the desertion of one of Fox's friends, Beckford, who moved for papers relating to the conduct of Admiral Knowles, the late governor of Jamaica. The accusations hurled against this gallant sailor were sufficient, says Walpole, to place him on the same pedestal of infamy as Verres, the Roman governor of Sicily. They did not stand the close investigation of a full House, and Knowles emerged triumphant from the ordeal. Throughout he had been warmly supported by Fox, on whom Pitt, in his efforts to attach Beckford to himself, had "cast reflections for endeavouring to screen the guilty."

Five days later a motion, to bestow £120,000 on those Colonies and individuals in America who had shown zeal and activity in the recent campaigns, was objected to by Pitt and Charles Townshend.

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, December 3, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,861).

“ On Wednesday last there came a message from the Crown to enable His Majesty, by a free gift, to reward those of the Northern Colonies who had shewn the most zeal and had incurred great expense and hazard in resisting the French, and to encourage them in proceeding, &c. Upon which it was moved to refer the same to the Committee of Supply, into which the House immediately resolved itself ; and Mr Chs Townshend took occasion to say he did not rise absolutely to oppose the motion, but represented against the irregularity of so immediately going into the Committee of Supply. That when money was to be granted, the Colonies were commended, but when their rights were to be consider'd and their cause to be maintain'd, which was the cause of England, then they were treated with contempt or neglect. To this Mr Fox made a short reply ; upon which Mr Pitt got up, and among other things said that he should remember that in the same memorable year an attempt was made and a precedent set for explaining away one of the most valuable clauses of the Act of Settlement. That in the same year an attempt was made to break through the sacred forms of granting money in that House, and that gentlemen might repent their too easy facility in countenancing and supporting a Ministry without connexion of any sort on any point, except that one of loosening and undermining the great bulwarks of the Constitution. Mr F. replied that the gentleman might remember at the same time, that all these memorable attempts were not those of the Ministry but of that House of Commons, and of a more memorable majority in the first instance than had ever appeared on their Journals ; that no Ministry but might be proud of being remembered in such company ; but how such a majority would bear such treatment of being told that they might repent, &c., was worth that gentleman's consideration.

“ That for his own part, he had no objection to that stile of speaking, for that he had sensibly felt the service it did him in the House. That as to the connexion in the Ministry, nothing could better prove that it was entire than the notoriety of its being their interest. That their inclination, the conjunctures, their duty to their master and country, made it necessary ; and the best proof that



it was a true connexion was, that, had it been otherwise, more civility would be shewn by some persons to some part of the Ministry. That he was convinced of this truth by two things, of which he had always been very fond, namely, common sense and experience.”<sup>1</sup>

Pitt's remark, that Fox had “talked gibberish, had mov'd the money perhaps in order to get sham receipts from the Colonies, and let the money be sunk in some corrupt, avaritious, etc., corner of the court,” was received with the contempt it deserved. For the moment Pitt was overreaching himself, and his opponent was fully cognisant of the fact.

“He and Grenville were like men beside themselves, lost in passion; and then Ld Duplin stupidly took Pitt down to order, and prevented him from expressing himself and me from exposing him still more. But it was enough. And on the Monday, Friday and Tuesday preceeding, we had the same thing in a less degree, that is, long and warm speeches upon most frivolous matter, giving me opportunity of hurting them: and still more, and very greatly, especially on Monday, helping myself. You may believe it is strongly as I represent it, when I tell your Grace that the Speaker (not apt to be explicit) says I had a complete conquest, and that if Mr Pitt go's on as he has done these three last days, and do's not provide better matter to make his fine speeches upon, he will soon grow as insignificant as any man who ever sat in that House. These were the gentlemen who (it was said) could put me in a passion when they would. But your Grace knows I have often told you, that whatever the appearance might be, I was never in a passion in the House of Commons.”<sup>2</sup>

The meeting of the Cabinet at which the grant to America had been sanctioned was held at Cumberland's apartment on January 20.<sup>3</sup> It was decided at the same

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis to Devonshire, February 3, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, January 31, 1756 (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> Add. MSS. 32,996.

time to send a Commander-in-Chief to America, with two battalions from Ireland ; and to raise four new battalions in Pennsylvania and the Colonies adjacent.<sup>1</sup> The latter proposal occupied seven whole days of the time of the House of Commons with futile debate. Pitt and Charles Townshend were again associated in opposition to the scheme and its details.

Briefly the facts were these. A suggestion had been brought to Cumberland by Prevost, a Protestant refugee, to raise part of the men from among the Swiss and German settlers in America ; and, as many of them could speak no English, to sanction the appointment of a certain percentage of officers of their own nationalities. The plan was unpopular in America, and more than one petition was presented against it by the Colonies. Fox himself was not wedded to it, but troops of any kind seemed to him better than none. "My inclination to the scheme proceeds from my fears, too well grounded, for America next summer, if you do not furnish it with regular strength ; and the question is not between sending good Swiss officers or good British, but between sending Swiss or none."<sup>2</sup>

These debates ranged over a wide field, and subjects extraneous to the points at issue were continually introduced into the discussions. To relate them at length would prove tedious. At one time, the recent dismissal from the service of Sir Henry Erskine for his attitude in Parliament, was the *casus belli*. At another, general grievances of the American colonists. Pitt was always in attack, Fox in defence : and on the whole the latter came off best. "Nothing is luminous compared with Charles Townshend," wrote Walpole : "he drops down

<sup>1</sup> This suggestion had been discussed at an earlier meeting of the Cabinet on January 7. It was then proposed that, "instead of Mr Prevost's scheme, an estimate to be laid before Parliament of a regiment consisting of 3 battalions to be raised out of foreign and other Protestants residing in N. America" (Holland House MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, December 27, 1755 (Add. MSS. 32,861).

dead in a fit, has a resurrection, thunders in the Capitol, confounds the Treasury bench, laughs at his own party, is laid up next day, and overwhelms the good women that go to nurse him.”<sup>1</sup> After numerous divisions the bill for four battalions of a thousand men each was passed. Under the title of Royal Americans, they formed the nucleus of the famous Sixtieth.<sup>2</sup>

And now *augmentation* seemed to have become the watchword of the Ministry, when, as Pitt justly complained, it was all too late. His view, oft expressed, was that, with ordinary foresight, the present straits to which the country was reduced might have been avoided. By home recruiting she might have been spared the disgrace of seeking safety in mercenary troops. England's past glories had been due to her own sons: to bring in the foreigner was to prove her degradation. In this strain thundered Pitt. Yet there was also much to be said on the other side. Pitt's arguments were illusory. The introduction of the Germans was simply a temporary expedient; and was by no means without recent precedent. Dutch soldiers had been brought over in 1745, and no one thought any the worse of the country.

It was to Ireland that the Government finally turned for fresh levies. The suggestion seems to have emanated from the Lord-Lieutenant. “I have been turning in my thoughts whether we might not be of some service to you. If that should be the case, I have some reason to hope that I could bring the House of Commons to desire me to make up the army complete to 12,000 men, continuing to pay the forces that are abroad upon our establishment, which, with what is wanted to complete, wou'd be near 3,000.”<sup>3</sup> Cumberland was delighted at the idea, but insisted that “Papists” must be excluded from enlist-

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Letters*, iii. 403.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the British Army*, ii. 295.

<sup>3</sup> Hartington to H. Fox, November 1, 1755. The question was first discussed at the Cabinet meeting on January 7 (Holland House MSS.).

ment. Devonshire at once set about his enquiries, and after a period of hesitation, wrote to Fox that he thought all would be well. The trump card to play must be fear of invasion. But he insisted that to send further regiments abroad from Ireland at that moment would be to jeopardise the whole scheme.<sup>1</sup> And so, to suit his wishes, it was arranged that though the two regiments for America should be sent from Ireland, they should be retained on the English establishment. An address to the King, asking for an increase of forces, was thought preferable to acting upon a message from him : and this was passed at the end of January by the Irish House of Commons. Newcastle had contemplated a request for a grant of money ; £200,000, or even half that amount, would be an acceptable addition to the funds for general defence. But he discarded the thought, in deference to Devonshire's representations of the clamour which would ensue, and showed willingness to accept assistance in kind.

Some delay was occasioned, before permission was obtained to commence recruiting. Doubts were cast upon the legality of exceeding the Irish establishment of 12,000 men ; although in the opinion of the law officers, the act in question would not hold good in the case of emergency. Yet the mutual jealousy of the two legislatures was such, that it was deemed advisable to put all in strict order, and to take no steps until the English Parliament had announced that the necessity had actually arisen. The course to be adopted was not finally decided upon until March 12.

“ We met last night on the Act of the 10th of K. Wm 3d, disbanding all the English army except 7,000 and all the Irish army except 12,000 men, which could not possibly mean to limit the number for future time. There is not a word in the act that can be forced into such a meaning,

<sup>1</sup> Devonshire to H. Fox, January 24, 1756. A rumour of the proceedings of the Cabinet of January 20 had apparently reached him. See *ante*, p. 313.



nor can it be suppos'd without the greatest absurdity. But it has been always thought to do so ; Whigs have at all times said so. Ld Granville is positive, and, upon the whole, regard must be paid to the groundless interpretation which tradition has given to an Act of Parliament that you see before you. And the method to be taken is this. In answer to the message that comes next week from the Crown to Parliamt here, we are to fling in the word, *Ireland*. Then I am to send immediately a messenger to yr Grace, with the King's pleasure to make the propos'd augmentation, and yr Grace will, without taking any notice of what has pass'd here, effect it." <sup>1</sup>

Some friction also arose upon the form which the augmentation should take. Devonshire would have preferred to raise whole regiments, and Fox took the same view. Cumberland and the King were for companies to be joined to existing units, and had their way. Two letters from Fox to the Lord-Lieutenant outline the scheme in its final shape.

" I shew'd H.R.Hss. your Grace's of Apl 1st, and told him (as I had done before) how much I preferr'd yr Grace's scheme of augmentation. But I find Ld George Sackville, who knows Ireland as well as his profession, is very glad the scheme of light horse is laid aside. As to companys without any regiment, that was in consequence of H.M.'s will and pleasure ; I would have had three regiments and no additional companies. But now as to what is order'd. There are to be 2 companies, of 100 men each, to each regiment. The other companies in each still consisting of 70 only. These companies are to be drafted, in case of action, to recruit their regiments ; and they are in the mean time to be distributed in garrisons ; and the use of the majors is to inspect and command these companies acting thus separately from their regiments. You may appoint a major to ev'ry six companys, or if you find or forsee any convenience from it, you may make an additional major to each of the 4 eldest regiments, and send him to this service. I am not without

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, March 13, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

hopes that in the progress of these troubles, you may, when here, do as we have done, and turn these addl companies into regiments.<sup>1</sup>

“ H. Mty, upon reading Mr Conway’s letter and inclos’d comparison of the two plans of augmentation, resolv’d warmly not only to adhere to the raising no new regiments, but to strike out the 4 majors out of M.G. Napier’s plan ; and has this day confirmed to me his pleasure that yr Grace should add two addl companies of 100 men each to each regiment, and make no new field officers. As H.M. did not declare his pleasure on the further augmentation of dragoons, I advise yr Grace to stop (as you are inclin’d to do) at 8 men per troop, till you shall yourself see and speak to H.R.Hss and H.My, with both of whom I wish yr Grace more success on ev’ry occasion than I have had on this.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, April 8, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 15, 1756 (*ibid.*).

## CHAPTER XVI

ALLUSION has already been made to the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief for America. Lord Loudoun was selected for the post. The position was one of extreme difficulty. It was arranged that the Commander-in-Chief should rank on an equality with the governors of the various States; and the task of humouring their idiosyncrasies was one fit only for the ablest of diplomats. Loudoun was not of this mould—"a mere pen-and-ink man," Lord Shelburne calls him: and from the commencement was at a disadvantage. He did not land in America until late in July, a month after the arrival of Major-General Abercromby, who sailed with the regiments from Ireland. Colonel Webb had been ordered to leave Falmouth early in April, in order to supersede General Shirley and await his superior officers.

Shirley, governor of Massachusetts, had temporarily taken over the command of the troops at Braddock's death. Educated as a lawyer, he was totally unfitted for the direction of military enterprise, although he considered himself to be a genius in that capacity. His schemes for the ensuing campaign were ambitious; but they were regarded as unpractical, and were consequently not smiled upon at home. "I don't suspect Shirley of treachery," wrote Fox to the First Lord of the Treasury, "but I have no doubt of his having great schemes and that he trusts the execution to traitors, and that he ought not to stay in America."<sup>1</sup> He had seriously depleted the

<sup>1</sup> March 27, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,864). Fox was even more outspoken to Halifax. "He must not stay in America in any capacity," he wrote on the same date. Information that Shirley had been employing a

war-chest, and had little to show for it. Halifax, at the Board of Trade, also speaks with disapproval of his actions, "fomenting disputes, promoting ineffectual enquiries, and countenancing a paper war against your province."<sup>1</sup> His recall was decided upon early in March. Cumberland would have brought him back under arrest, and it was largely due to Fox and Hardwicke that he was spared this indignity. Instructions were therefore sent to him to return immediately, in order to confer with the authorities at home upon the situation.<sup>2</sup> The suggestion that he should be given the governorship of Jamaica did not materialise, but he was subsequently appointed to the Bahamas.

The trend of Shirley's preparations had aimed at the occupation of Crown Point, and of Fort Niagara, on Lake Ontario. He thought to move by the route of Oswego, a point of great strategic importance, situated upon the same stretch of water. But Loudoun, on his arrival, found little to his satisfaction. The report of his engineers showed him that Oswego was defenceless against the attack which the Marquis de Montcalm, the new French Commander-in-Chief, was known to be planning against it. The blow fell early in August, within a few weeks of Loudoun's arrival, and before the reinforcements which he hurried to its assistance had even reached the locality. Having destroyed Oswego, Montcalm transferred five thousand troops to Crown Point and Ticonderoga. Thus any movement in that direction was rendered useless; and further operations were abandoned by Loudoun for the year.

The Shirley episode is one of the instances in which certain Lydius, a man strongly suspected of pro-French sympathies, and that he had embarked on a policy of his own regarding the Indian tribes, brought matters to a head.

<sup>1</sup> Halifax to Governor Hardy, March 31, 1756. (Record Office, C.O.5).

<sup>52</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet minute, March 29, 1756 (Holland House MSS.).



we find Fox taking a leading part in colonial matters. The supervision of American affairs was divided between the Board of Trade and the Secretary for the Southern Department. It is clear from the tangled relations existing between the various Colonies how wide was the field for reorganisation in the hands of an able administrator. But this was not in Fox's line. No one was more skilled in manipulating a difficult situation at home; but he lacked the imagination and the initiative to deal with matters outside the range of his own special objective. Domestic politics were ever his hobby: the problems of the Continent and of the British dominions beyond the seas he had neither the inclination nor the desire to solve.

He seems to have won some success in the course of his diplomatic relations with Spain. At his retirement, that court expressed their regret, and eulogised "his candour, honour and capacity."<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister, General Wall, an Irishman by birth and at one time Ambassador in London, was closely bound to the policy of friendship with England. His views were shared by his master, Ferdinand VI, who was essentially a man of peace. Their efforts to preserve the country from the turmoil of a pan-European conflagration were ably seconded by the Spanish representative in England, M. D'Abreu, and by the British Ambassador, Sir Benjamin Keene, one of the steady, rather than of the brilliant order of diplomatists, and a personal friend of Henry Fox. Nor was the Secretary of State behindhand in his attempts to further goodwill between the two countries. He had full intimation of Wall's difficulties; and did his best to smooth his path. Yet the British interpretation of the Treaty of 1667, regarding the right of search of vessels on the high seas, raised suspicions, which even Fox's ready concessions were powerless to allay, and led to serious consequences in after-years. For the moment, however, Wall accepted the assurances which Fox was

<sup>1</sup> Sir B. Keene to H. Fox, December 2, 1756.

able to furnish ; after chiding D'Abreu for his want of firmness in supporting the interests of his country.<sup>1</sup>

It was well for England that the spirit of mutual confidence between the courts stood so high : for the temptations to which Spain was subjected were strong enough to shake the firmest resolution. Minorca, and even Gibraltar, were to be offered to her.<sup>2</sup> In the former case, the capture was apparently to be effected solely at French expense ; in the latter, fifteen ships-of-the-line were all that Spain was to be asked to provide for the conquest. Next, the strongest pressure was brought to bear on her by Austria in the direction of an alliance with France. And when all else failed, a plot was to be set on foot to remove Wall and Alva, the pro-British element in the Government. But the Spanish King and his Minister remained true to the interests of England, and refused to budge. Mediation between England and France they attempted.<sup>3</sup> But the lines were those of similar *pour-parlers* with Prussia, and as France would not stir from her former attitude, they deemed it useless to proceed with the negotiation. Indeed, our Government owed a vast debt of gratitude to Wall. Had the Spaniards broken away, as they were urged to do, and had themselves undertaken the capture of the coveted fortresses, how different would have been the situation ! The hands of France would have been freed to act solely on her more northern boundaries, and British unreadiness would assuredly have led to even graver consequences than the loss of one island in the Mediterranean.

Tidings of French activity in the Mediterranean reached England on February 3, in a letter from Mr Birtles, the

<sup>1</sup> Copies of private letters from M. Wall to M. D'Abreu, June 20, July 28, September 9, 10, 1756 ; H. Fox to Sir B. Keene, August 18, 1756 (Holland House MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> Copy of M. Cressener's advices from Versailles, February 22, 1756 (recd. March 8), (Holland House MSS.)

<sup>3</sup> Sir B. Keene to H. Fox, March 22, April 5, 23, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,863, 32,864).

British consul at Genoa, with a hint that Minorca might be the object in view.<sup>1</sup> A letter from Cressener at Versailles, of date January 26, also reached England on February 7, mentioning some gossip about an expedition against Port Mahon. Lord Bristol, the British Minister at Turin, had written even earlier—on November 1, 1755<sup>2</sup>—that 12 ships-of-the-line were at Toulon awaiting sailing orders; but qualified his statement on December 20,<sup>3</sup> by the more correct information that five frigates were ready for sea, and that the larger ships would not be fit to sail for many months.<sup>4</sup>

The imminence of some expedition from Toulon was corroborated from the intercepted French sources, at the end of February; and by information from Marseilles.<sup>5</sup> But the real objective of the court of Versailles remained clothed in mystery. Were the preparations in the Mediterranean a feint, to decoy the British ships far from the Channel and leave the shores of England defenceless? Or, conversely, were the troops assembled along the west coast of France designed to occupy the minds of the English commanders, while the Mediterranean lay at the mercy of their southern fleet? Sir Benjamin Keene, writing in the middle of February, still inclined to the latter view. He reported that twelve "capital ships" lay at anchor in Toulon harbour, and that he thought very seriously of the situation.<sup>6</sup>

The directness of the warning was at last sufficient to rouse those in authority from their slumbers. Reinforce-

<sup>1</sup> Corbett's *England in the Seven Years War*, i. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Received November 28.

<sup>3</sup> Received January 13, 1756.

<sup>4</sup> Extracts from advices from Lord Bristol (Holland House MSS.).

<sup>5</sup> The first letter in this series which mentions a possible attack on Minorca, is dated February 6. It was despatched to England via Germany.

<sup>6</sup> Sir B. Keene to H. Fox, February 13, 24, 1756. (Record Office, For. St. Papers, Spain, 151.) Through Keene's foresight in forwarding a copy of his earlier dispatch, the information came to hand on March 6. The original letter was not received until the 24th.

ments must be forwarded without loss of time, a course which Cumberland and Fox had long been anxious to pursue. The Duke had issued instructions as early as April 1755, for recruits to be sent to Minorca and Gibraltar while the seas were still clear,<sup>1</sup> and at Christmas had urged the despatch of a fleet.<sup>2</sup> As usual, his suggestions were regarded with jealous eyes; while Fox's definite proposal, during the first week in March, to send out a strong squadron, was overruled by his colleagues. But a few days later this policy could no longer be gainsaid. "The intelligence concerning the French intended attempt on Minorca was read. Their Lordships are humbly of opinion that as strong a squadron as can be spared from hence should be got ready to send into the Mediterranean."<sup>3</sup> But even when the step was finally taken, one member of the Cabinet remained anxious and dissatisfied. "Ev'ry body's attention is fix'd on Port Mahon. I am in great pain for it. But some that know better think it will hold out till Byng comes, and that he will save it. I wish and wish'd, while wishing might have been to the purpose, that he had been sent sooner."<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of March, Hawke had been ordered to blockade the French coast, but did not start, and then only with part of his ships, till a fortnight later. The Mediterranean fleet was placed under the command of Admiral Byng. Ten ships-of-the-line were all that could be spared for him; but with three others and some frigates already on the station under Commodore Edgumbe, it was believed that his squadron would be "superior to any force the French have in those parts."<sup>5</sup> The force to be employed seemed barely adequate for the possibilities it might have to face; yet Anson firmly

<sup>1</sup> Cumberland to H. Fox, April 2, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> Cabinet minute, March 9, 1756.

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, April 20, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>5</sup> H. Fox to Sir B. Keene, March 15, 1756. (Record Office, For. St. Papers, Spain, 151.)



refused to provide a larger number of ships, or to weaken the defence which he had built up against invasion. It is true that the navy had suffered severely in 1755 under Hawke and Boscawen, and to refit in haste was an impossibility, owing to lack of dockyard accommodation. Yet it seems impossible to believe that more ships could not have been spared for the task on hand, had the true necessities of the situation been understood, and the stations of the available vessels arranged upon more scientific lines. But Anson was prejudiced against sending his forces beyond the power of immediate recall, and had declared himself, "strongly of opinion, that whenever the French intend anything in earnest, their attack will be against this country."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the difficulty of finding a fleet, the scarcity of sailors had also to be faced. Byng was seriously delayed on this account. To complete Admiral Hawke's complement of men, an embargo had been laid on Irish shipping,<sup>2</sup> by which it was hoped to obtain 1,500 men; but, in deference to the representations of the Lord-Lieutenant, the order was removed long before the full number had been reached. Yet although, in England, the press-gangs were everywhere in operation, it was not till the beginning of April that Byng's last 200 sailors were collected.<sup>3</sup>

Leaving Spithead on April 7, Byng reached Gibraltar on May 2. His orders, communicated to him on March 30, were bewildering in their variety. The confusion was due to the impossibility of foreseeing the strategy of the Toulon fleet and the object for which it was really intended. First, he was to ascertain if any ships had passed out into the Atlantic. In this case, America being

<sup>1</sup> Anson to Hardwicke, December 6, 1755 (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 268). It is only fair to state that Fox speaks of some scare of an expedition from Dunkirk, as late as the end of July (H. Fox to Anson, July 30, 1756); and even defended his colleague in a debate on May 13.

<sup>2</sup> March 2, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>3</sup> *Political History of England*, ix. 441.

clearly their destination, he had orders to detach certain of his vessels to reinforce the British fleet in those waters. But if none had been sighted, he was to proceed with all haste to Minorca, taking on board at Gibraltar a regiment additional to that of Fusiliers which he was transporting from England. He was to use "all possible means in his power" for the relief of the island, if he found that the French had developed their attack. Should he not find them there, he was to blockade Toulon: and were any of the enemy's vessels to slip subsequently out of the Mediterranean, he was to follow with part of his fleet. Especially was he warned to refrain from retaining with him more ships than were absolutely necessary to effect his purpose.

Three days after Byng's departure, the French sailed from Toulon. Fifteen thousand troops, under the Duc de Richelieu, an elderly Marshal, whose prowess had been better proved in the drawing-rooms of the fair sex than on the field of battle, were escorted by twelve ships-of-the-line under Admiral de la Galissonnière. Their destination proved to be Minorca, and there they appeared on the 18th.

No attempt had been made by the Ministry, notwithstanding the warnings which they had received, to reinforce the inadequate garrison or to put in order the ruined fortifications and obsolete defences of Mahon, the chief town of the island. Lord Tyrawley, the governor, was absent in England, as were a large proportion of the officers of the regiments stationed there.<sup>1</sup> The command devolved upon General Blakeney, a gouty veteran of eighty-four, whose complete force totalled only 2,860 effectives. To defend Mahon was out of the question, and the troops withdrew to Fort St Philip, a rocky fortress

<sup>1</sup> The colonels of all the four regiments were away on leave. They and others were warned on February 3 to return to duty, but no ship was provided to take them, and they finally sailed with Byng's fleet (Corbett's *England in the Seven Years War*, i. 103).

of great strength, which commanded the harbour. Edgcumbe, who was lying in the port, correctly withdrew with his ships to Gibraltar on the approach of the French, having landed all available marines to assist in the defence.

Richelieu occupied the town five days after his landing at Ciudadela upon the opposite side of the island. But his difficulties were great, and his dispositions faulty. By the middle of May his siege-guns had made but slight impression upon the natural defences of the citadel.

Meanwhile Byng was wasting six precious days at Gibraltar, although Edgcumbe, whom he found awaiting him, had given him full warning of the situation. The governor, General Fowke, had received two conflicting sets of orders from the War Office and Admiralty respectively, concerning the troops who were to accompany Byng's fleet to Minorca.<sup>1</sup> Terrified at the slenderness of his own resources, he strove to make capital out of this apparent contradiction. By demonstrating to a council of war that the Government were hesitating in their policy, and backed by the report of the engineers upon the difficulty of throwing succours into Fort St Philip, he obtained its consent to refuse the additional regiment, "as it would evidently weaken the garrison." All he would do, was to find sufficient men to replace Edgcumbe's marines left at Mahon. The timorous natures of the two commanders were reacting upon one another with dire results. Byng had already been found wanting in a previous war, and was now full of dejection at the task which he had undertaken. His feelings found expression in melancholy letters to those at home.

And so, heavy with the thought of impending disaster, he weighed anchor on the 8th with his fourteen ships. Fort St Philip was sighted on the 19th, and on the following day that indecisive engagement was fought with the

<sup>1</sup> Copy of report of a council of war held at Gibraltar, May 4, 1756 (Holland House MSS.). Fox's instructions to the offices in question are perfectly clear.

French fleet, which remains memorable in the history of Great Britain from the shadow of the Admiral's subsequent fate. Whether Byng's course was correct in engaging the enemy, it is not for us to decide. Nor is it pertinent to discuss whether he should have subsequently retired to Gibraltar without further effort to assist the beleaguered garrison. The simple facts were, that at a council of war, "that favourite resource of incapable commanders," held four days after the battle, it was decided to withdraw; and the resolution thus taken was carried into effect. It was nearly a month before Byng reached Gibraltar. He anchored there on June 19,<sup>1</sup> three or four days after reinforcements had arrived from England, consisting of five ships-of-the-line, under Admiral Brodrick. The despatch of the four ships to assist him had been sanctioned by the Cabinet on May 6, and an additional ship was afterwards added to their number. One battalion was to accompany them.<sup>2</sup>

The decision to send a further force, as soon as it could be spared, had been taken before Byng's departure. But at the moment the spectre of invasion held the field. A hastily equipped squadron of ten ships, under Boscawen, sailed on April 29 to join Hawke, when its presence in the Mediterranean would have materially altered the situation. Indeed, the fact that any action was taken at all, was due to a letter to Fox from one of Edgcumbe's frigate-captains, Augustus Hervey, Lady Hervey's son, who afterwards became Earl of Bristol; and to the definite news of Richelieu's landing, which had arrived about the same time.<sup>3</sup> The initiative was probably attributable to Cumberland and Fox. Whether the suggestion was made before Boscawen's departure, that this whole fleet should be deflected to the Mediterranean, is uncertain: but some such proposal was subsequently made. Fox was unable,

<sup>1</sup> Corbett's *England in the Seven Years War*, i. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet minute, May 8, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> D'Abreu to H. Fox, May 5, 1756.



as we shall see, to coerce an unwilling Cabinet ; but he profited by the opportunity of urging the necessity of haste and the desirability of despatching ships which were already upon the high seas.

“ I know your Grace has Captn Hervey’s letter, or I should send it. There is bad as well as good in it. But if its contents are true as to ships of war, Bing is undoubtedly superior to La Galissonière. If the Fr. troops are not 11,000, the place may hold out the longer. But the four ships I have this moment order’d can be of no use to relieve the place, if they are to stay till they can convey transports which are to bring Hessians, & then take up regiments at Plymouth.<sup>1</sup> I wish therefore Boscawen might be instantly sent to, and order’d to detach a number of ships to Gibraltar, to carry hence some further immediate relief to F. St Php. The new regiments from Plymouth might follow to replace those drawn from Gibraltar.”<sup>2</sup>

But his suggestions were overruled. “ When His Royal Highness proposed sending orders immediately to V. A. Boscawen to detach a part of his fleet, Ld Anson feared that that would weaken too much his fleet, and therefore chose to send rather three or four large ships from hence.”<sup>3</sup>

Parliament was prorogued on May 27, early enough to avoid unpleasant disclosures of disaster in the Mediterranean. Byng’s despairing dispatches from Gibraltar and details of the council of war were received on May 31.<sup>4</sup> On June 2, came the report of La Galissonière, the French Admiral, forwarded by Mazzoni, the Spanish Ambassador

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, May 7, 1756. Fox seems to have been mistaken in the supposition that the ships were first to be used for this duty. They were to proceed direct to Plymouth, there to take up the troops. His error was made clear to him at the next meeting of the Cabinet at the Admiralty on the 8th, at which Hardwicke, Anson, Holderness and Fox were present. (Hardwicke to Newcastle, May 9, 1756. Add. MSS. 32,864 ; Cabinet minute, May 8).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Newcastle, May 7, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to H. Fox, May 8, 1756.

<sup>4</sup> *Bedford Corres.*, ii. 191.

in Paris, to D'Abreu, of the British failure off Mahon and the subsequent disappearance of their fleet. A Cabinet was held the same day, at which it was decided to supersede the commanders.<sup>1</sup>

"On Monday came the cursed letters and more cursed council of war from Gibraltar, together with a letter from Adml Byng to the Admiralty of much the same tenor, of which I have no copy. One expression is that he shall go and see what can be done to relieve Minorca (carrying no relief), and if he finds that as he expects, he will return to save Gibraltar. You will see by the extract of D'Abreu's letters and relation enclosed, which came yesterday, that he did go, found the French fleet where we wish'd them, and inferior, and how infamously and fatally our fleet behaved. We have nothing from them, but I doubt not our first news will be that Byng is returned to Gibraltar, and that a council of war says he did wisely. The consternation, anger and shame of everybody here on this occasion is extreme. Lord Trawley is going to supersede Fowke, and two admirals who will be fixed upon to-night. There is no waiting for explanations. If they can excuse themselves, amends must be made them. But the fleet, sufficiently dispirited, I dare say, already, must not be left so till enquiries can be made.

"Adieu, my dear Lord; I am sorry to send you such news as makes me almost ashamed that I am an Englishman. But you commanded me to send whatever was extraordinary. This is but too much so."<sup>2</sup>

Two days later Fox indited a private letter to General Fowke giving the reasons for his dismissal. The light which it throws on the views of the Government is important, and we make no apology for printing it in full.<sup>3</sup>

"As it is not necessary, so the obligation I have to you and my regard for you make it disagreeable to me to write you any office letter on this unlucky occasion. You will

<sup>1</sup> Minutes June 3, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,996).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, June 3, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> June 5, 1756.

hear the King's pleasure from Lord Barrington, but it may be of use to you to know particularly what has occasioned your disgrace. His Majesty could, by no means, brook your calling a council of war on orders directed to you singly; and when he saw the council of war and the opinion of the engineers referred to therein, he lost all patience. He observed that you take it for granted that batteries are raised on the two shores, and that those batteries cannot be silenced without thinking it worth while to examine or try either. That it would be dangerous or difficult, if not impracticable, to land any succours, His Majesty thinks a strange reason for not attempting it; and an inference, from a supposition that the place must at last fall into the enemy's hands, that therefore no more soldiers should be sent to enable it to hold out the longer, is indeed very extraordinary. But you was afraid for Gibraltar—a fear which His Majesty thinks you had not the least shadow of reason for entertaining till Fort St Philip should have been taken, which indeed seems at Gibraltar to have been imagined much weaker than we here hope it will have proved to be. It is remarkable that Major Mace, who has subscribed the engineers' opinion, shewed His Royal Highness and other officers of high rank the possibility of landing men at Fort St Philip, after the French should be in possession of the rest of the island and of the harbour. It is still more remarkable, that after he had signed such opinion, he should apply to you for hauvitzers to carry to a place where even men could not be landed. He is dismissed His Majesty's service; and M. G. Stuart is likewise recalled.

“ Give me leave, Sir, to wonder at an expression in your council of war, importing *that the Toulon squadron are equal in force, if not superior to that under the command of Admiral Byng*, whereas you inclose to me in your letter of April 29th a list of their ships, which shows them to be inferior. Your letter likewise mentions your offer to Byng of a detachment equal to a battalion to go on board the fleet (tho' not to put into Fort St Philip), which would equally have weakened your garrison.

“ Your letters came May 31st, and on Tuesday His Majesty ordered Lord Tyrawley to succeed you. On

Wednesday came from France an account that Byng with 13 ships-of-the-line, had retired from Galissonière with 12, and left him master of the sea before Port Mahon. Nothing can equal the consternation, anger and shame that your letters and this account have occasioned, and without waiting for enquiry two admirals are sent to relieve *Byng* and *West*. The thing wished here above all things was that these fleets might meet : had we lost the battle with great damage to the enemy, it had been gain ; and La Galissonière's account says that he prevented succour from being landed in Fort St Philip, by which expression, and indeed by his risking a battle, the opinion here that succour might have been flung into Fort St Philip is confirmed. I have, Sir, told you the reasonings here, in which all ranks and sorts of people agree ; and I sincerely wish that you may be better able than I am to refute them. I am sure you will think I have done the part of a friend in stating them thus fully to you."

As it happened, Hawke had put into Portsmouth with prizes in the nick of time, and was sent off without delay to take charge of the Mediterranean fleet. His arrival at the Rock, on July 4, found Byng still in the midst of preparations for returning to Minorca, a course which the above-mentioned reinforcements had encouraged him to undertake. But first there had been much to be done. A thousand sick were to be landed ; ships to be refitted and stores provided.

" We have many sick and wounded in the fleet. Scarce a ship that if we were to begin again but must now go to action some 40, 60 or 80 men less than they did before, when they were all short ; and no hospital ship to put them in : masts totally disabled, no port to refit of ours within 180 leagues. Everyone here calls out loudly on the manner this fleet was sent, and how late : how equipped, no storeship, no stores, no hospital ship, no freship nor no tender." <sup>1</sup>

Even Hawke, the pattern of intrepidity and daring in

<sup>1</sup> Capt. A. Hervey to H. Fox, " Off Minorca," May 25, 1756.



naval strategy, remained inactive for more than a week, devoting four valuable days to the fleet exercises. But no haste could then have saved Minorca. The British squadrons, when only a day out, met French transports on their way to Gibraltar, containing all that was left of the British garrison. Fort St Philip had been stormed on June 27. On the day following, Blakeney and his gallant band capitulated, conditionally upon receiving the full honours of war. Richelieu left a large garrison in Mahon, and made all haste to slip away to France before the return of the British fleet. By July 16 he was safe in Toulon harbour.

There the French remained. La Galissonnière's policy of defensive inactivity, inculcated by the orders of the French court, deterred Hawke from attempting any counterstroke to recover Minorca. The British Admiral maintained a strict blockade of the island, cutting off supplies, and raiding its shores. Beyond this he was powerless to annoy. A scheme for the occupation of Corsica came to nought : and, with the arrival of November, he was recalled to the Channel, by the exigencies of the situation and the altered position of affairs at home.

Byng and West sailed for home on July 9, the day on which the French declared war. They arrived at Portsmouth on July 26. The former was at once placed in close confinement, pending a court-martial. West, against whom no suggestion of reproach was forthcoming, was soon set at liberty, and was kindly received by the King. General Fowke was brought to a court-martial, and was suspended for a year for having mistaken his orders. As the charge brought against him had been disobedience, this verdict was in effect an acquittal of the more serious accusation. King George, however, was not deterred from dispensing with his services—a token significant of the treatment which was in store for the chief delinquent.

With the arrival of the admirals, the pent-up fury of the English nation burst into storm. An address from

the county of Dorset was the forerunner of many such documents from country and town alike, including one from the City of London. The petitioners besought the King to institute a proper enquiry into the causes of the failure, and to punish the culpable. The question of guilt resolved itself into two heads. If Byng's ill-success was due to the want of sufficient force, or if the material provided was unsuitable for carrying out the work in hand, then the blame was clearly to be apportioned to the Ministry. But if the fleet supplied to Byng was adequate and properly equipped, then the responsibility for the loss of Minorca must fall chiefly upon his head.

Although the resentment of the public centred itself on Byng, ministers did not escape their share of abuse. A shower of squibs and pamphlets, circulated broadcast, coupled their names with his as malefactors and traitors to their country. Hardwicke, Anson, Newcastle and Fox were associated in many of the satiric prints; and Walpole tells us that some form of card much in vogue, decorated with caricatures, was the invention of George Townshend's fertile brain. He adds that the original, "which had amazing vent, was of Newcastle and Fox, looking at each other, and crying, with Peachum in the *Beggar's Opera*, 'Brother, Brother, we are both in the wrong.'"

The consensus of opinion in the navy seems to have been adverse to Byng. "There are a good many officers come home in the same ship, and as you may imagine a good many letters from those who have not come; and by all one hears Mr Byng's conduct looks more and more like cowardice. They all blame him: the land officers (who were in the action) as well as the sea."<sup>1</sup> Fox professed himself free from all bias against him.

"There are many letters in town, dated Gibraltar, June 26th, and they all agree that the whole fleet, his own

<sup>1</sup> H. Digby to Ilchester, July 31, 1756 (Melbury MSS.). This view is corroborated by a letter from Captain Young, of the *Intrepid*, dated Gibraltar, June 20. A copy is among the Holland House MSS.

division as well as West's, cry out against him. I am very sorry for it, and have not, as some of my bror ministers have, the wretched comfort of thinking that his ill conduct will divert the blame. We are, notwithstanding that, and shall be, much blamed; the rage of people increases hourly. I don't deserve blame, but that won't save me from it; and, though I were to meet with no more than I deserve, that would not alleviate the concern I am under for this great and irretrievable loss." <sup>1</sup>

Yet Fox's sense of the importance of Byng's trial seems hardly consistent with this negative attitude. He implored Anson to take special precautions for the safe custody of the Admiral's person. "If he should escape, such a load of calumny will be laid upon us as we shall never be able to remove. . . . If he should die before trial it would be bad, and there is hardly anybody whom I more heartily wish health to, till his trial shall be over, than to Mr Byng." <sup>2</sup>

At first Fox had remained undismayed, but he speedily began to perceive the difficulties of the future.

"The rage of people, and of considerate people, for the loss of Minorca increases hourly. I have not more than my share of blame, which falls on the D. of Newcastle in so violent a degree, that if he were not of a very different make from what he has been represented, he could never be so cheerful as he is. But when Parliament meets, the scene of action will be the H. of Commons, and I, being the only figure of a minister there, shall of course draw all the odium on me." <sup>3</sup>

He foresaw the possibility that Newcastle would try to make a scapegoat of him, and was resolved to resist any attempt to place him in so equivocal a position.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Lady Hervey, July 24, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Anson (Draft), July 30, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, July 31, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>4</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 384.

He had been quite willing to defend the chief Minister during the debates upon the demand for supplies in May, and to gloss over the shortcomings of the Admiralty. But further than this he was not prepared to go: nor was he willing to take upon his shoulders responsibilities which were not rightly his own.

Fox's position since he became Secretary of State had been distinctly anomalous. The Cabinet as a whole was now rarely called together.<sup>1</sup> Business was transacted by a small inner clique, termed by Lord Granville the *Conciliabulum*, which consisted usually of the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, First Lord of the Treasury, First Lord of the Admiralty and the two Secretaries of State. The composition of this select council shows us clearly how impotent Fox was during the spring to enforce immediate action. He was powerless to push his demand for reinforcements; nor had he the gift of personal magnetism sufficient to win over recalcitrant colleagues to his own views. Newcastle was practically an autocrat, and, depending upon the support of Hardwicke and his son-in-law, Anson, did all he could to blind himself with a belief in the impossibility of war. Holderness was a nonentity, and Granville feared to spare one single ship for the Mediterranean. Fox was isolated and alone. For all the good he could effect, he might have been absent from the deliberations.

In a measure, therefore, Fox was individually the least to blame of all the ministers for the events of the past few months. Even Pitt allowed that things would have been far different had Fox been "sole Minister."<sup>2</sup> His warnings had fallen on unheeding ears: for, though oppressed by immediate fears of invasion, he differed from the majority in perceiving the dangers which lay beyond. His efforts to carry out his own views and those

<sup>1</sup> For the growth of this practice see an article in *Eng. Hist. Review*, xvii. 678, which deals with the whole subject.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 35.



of his patron, Cumberland, had clearly been overridden ; though we have no direct evidence to show how often he returned to the charge. The right course doubtless under the circumstances was to resign. But Fox had, unfortunately for his reputation, no such inclination. He had clambered into the saddle with difficulty : and there, for the present, he meant to stay. He accepted the fact that as a member of the Cabinet he shared the censure which the Mediterranean fiasco had brought with it ; but was equally satisfied that the blame was unmerited, so far as his personal share in the matter was concerned.

As early as May, when the situation was rapidly becoming acute, Newcastle was unable to conceal the feeling of personal terror with which he was consumed. In conversation with Dodington he spoke in scathing terms of the Admiralty, and of Anson's refusal to send off ships at the proper time. How could *he* be blamed, he asked Fox, a few days later, when dining at Holland House ? The sea was not *his* province. The latter's reply was hardly consoling. The City, said he, were furious at Minorca being left exposed, and, " generally, it would be ever true, that those who had the chief direction in an Administration, would bear the greatest share of blame ; and those persons deceived him who told him it was otherwise now." <sup>1</sup> Still his Grace was unable to believe that anyone could possibly censure his conduct, and, in that belief, appears finally to have forced himself into a peaceful beatitude.

In their fears for their own skins, ministers took care to turn the feeling against Byng to good account. A corrected version of his dispatches was circulated to the world, omitting certain features which were favourable to the prisoner. For this the public laid the chief blame on Fox. " People here talk very much of your curtailing Mr Byng's letter. This, they say, is a very unjustifiable thing, and a great injury to him, as very material parts

<sup>1</sup> Dodington's *Diary*, p. 382.

are left out. The D. of Bedford thinks this very unlucky, and that great handle will be made of it against you." <sup>1</sup> Fox made no attempt, in his reply, to deny his hand in the matter. He contended that the omissions were unimportant, in view of the charge upon which the prisoner was to be tried. "Whoever considers dates must see how wrong it would have been to have published Bingley's opinion of his fleet. And whoever can think it injurious to him must imagine he is not to be try'd for his behaviour in the action, and I never imagined that he could be try'd for anything else." <sup>2</sup> To a deputation from the City asking that the admiral should be brought to justice, Newcastle blurted out his private inclinations. "Oh! indeed he shall be tried immediately, he shall be hanged directly!"

Yet when the time arrived, there is no doubt that Byng had the benefit of a fair trial, whatever were the shortcomings of the Ministry. He was arraigned before a naval court on the charge of having failed to do his best in the presence of the enemy, and on this count the verdict was guilty, the penalty death. Supreme efforts were made in various quarters to save the unfortunate admiral from that ignominious end. The punishment, it was said, was too great to fit the crime. No charge of personal cowardice was alleged against him. But he had failed to grasp the world-wide issues which were involved in his action, and had been found wanting in the hour of trial. Circumstances were too strong for his apologists. The public required a scapegoat and an expiation for the loss of Minorca. Byng was a victim ready to hand; and in consequence atoned for his error upon the quarter-deck of the *Monarch*.

<sup>1</sup> Digby to H. Fox, Bath [October 18 ?], 1756.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Digby, October 20, 1756 (*Hist. MSS. Comm. Rep.*, viii. App. p. 221a).

## CHAPTER XVII

BEFORE the tragedy of Byng's trial and execution took place, Newcastle had fallen from office, and a new Minister reigned in his stead.

The first link in the chain of circumstances which was to drive the First Lord into temporary retirement was the attitude of his trusted henchman, Murray: "his buckler," as Walpole neatly puts it, "against his ally, Fox, and his antagonist, Pitt." The death of Sir Dudley Ryder, the Lord Chief Justice, took place on May 25. Without a moment's delay Murray put forward his claim for the vacant post, and for a peerage. His position placed him "above competition." Newcastle was in despair. Without his Attorney-General in the Commons he was lost: he was delivered bound hand and foot into Fox's power.

"What a case should *I* be in, if Fox was my sole dependence. But if I was dupe enough to depend upon it, I am sure Fox cannot do it, if he would; Pitt would bear him down before the session was half over. . . . All you can say is, Fox will be sincere, if I will let him; to which I answer, first, he cannot do it, if he would. Our debates must be foreign affairs, difficulties at home, occasion'd by the war. As to the first he is totally ignorant, and Pitt must be his master. As to the latter, he will not (like you) probe the wound to the bottom. He will endeavour to skim it over, and naturally let the light upon himself as little as possible."<sup>1</sup>

The letter ends with a dash of that noxious tincture

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to W. Murray, May 30, 1756 (Add MSS. 32,865).

with which Newcastle never failed to colour Fox's motives. His Grace hinted at the secret joy which the latter would feel at the disappearance of the Attorney-General from the House of Commons.

Fortunately we can at once refute the insinuation, by quoting an actual expression of Fox's feelings, addressed to one of his intimates.<sup>1</sup> He spoke of Murray in terms very different !

"The Atty-General will be Chief Justice and a peer, nor can all the allurements and largest offers that were ever yet made to any man bribe him from it. I shall miss him in the House of Commons, and indeed find an essential want of him. We were made for one another there. But the Duke of Newcastle sees it in the light of the greatest loss to him, and has said that there is nobody now but *me* there, and that he must unite firmly and thoroughly with me. Proof that he had not meant to do so yet."

Newcastle and Hardwicke seem clearly to have realised the truth of Charles Townshend's congratulations to the new Lord Chief Justice: "I wish you joy, or rather myself, for you will ruin the Duke of Newcastle by quitting the House of Commons, and the Chancellor by going into the House of Lords."<sup>2</sup> They left no stone unturned to alter his decision. Bribe was heaped on bribe,<sup>3</sup> but to no purpose: and at last Murray plainly announced that if he was not to be Chief Justice, at least he would not remain Attorney-General. The affair dragged on through the autumn. "The Att.-Genl's great point is put off till November, after being agreed to by Lord Chancellor, through his friend the D. of Newcastle's wilful, trifling delay, without one reason for it."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, May 29, 1756 (Phillips MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 64, 67.

<sup>3</sup> A pension of £6,000 a year was offered to Murray to remain a month, and when this inducement failed, it was renewed with the request that he would defend them on the first day of the session only.

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox to W. Ellis, July 12, 1756.



Indeed, Murray's disappearance from the House of Commons was the deciding factor in Fox's schemes for the coming session. Lyttelton was the only man of note on whom he could now rely ; and to depend on Lyttelton in debate was to trust to a broken reed.

" You may collect what a time I am likely to have next session, by the torrent of abuse I share in now. Now, I have only a share, and not a great one. But then, being the only person who can be attacked in the House of Commons, the whole storm will fall on me. Not, however, to the excuse of others. I need not to you say that upon my word I deserve none of it. You will be surpriz'd to hear that I am more alarmed than either the D. of Newcastle or Ld Chancellor. They have indeed much more courage than I have ; and as yet show no other sign of fear than making up to me, with the strongest professions of sincere and cordial union. But if they see things truly, they would see that I can neither leave or save them. And therefore, for all our sakes, I will make them look out for other and more help." <sup>1</sup>

Fox was not to be deceived by fair words, when every other symptom pointed to Newcastle's growing hostility. The iron of the latter's ingratitude for the tranquillity of the recent session burnt deep into his soul. " My services in the last session," he wrote, " where affairs went beyond expectation, have met with frowns and coldness and distaste, and from what this has arisen neither I nor any friend I have can say." <sup>2</sup>

Yet it is true that Newcastle did not lack good grounds for distrusting Fox's attitude. Upon one subject which came under consideration during the spring, the latter took a strong line of his own. A Militia Bill, introduced into the Commons by the Opposition and backed by the joint influence of George Townshend and Pitt, was supported by Fox. He had always expressed himself in

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, August 7, 1756 (Phillips MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

favour of some such organisation, if a suitable scheme could be evolved. In Murray's opinion, Fox ensured its passage without a division.

"I would not, against the opinion of every Whig in the House, as well as my own, speak against the Militia Bill, H.M. pressing me more than once to it, merely and professedly that I might share with the D. of N. in the unpopularity of a measure I did not approve. For it was very much against my judgment that the H. of Lords rejected, without attempting to alter, that bill."<sup>1</sup>

A further step, taken by Fox in July entirely upon his own initiative, was not calculated to endear him to his colleagues. In order to outbid France in her efforts to win over Spain, he made the suggestion, at the close of a Cabinet meeting on July 8, that Gibraltar should be handed over to the latter country in exchange for Port Mahon.<sup>2</sup> The evacuation of Gibraltar had been seriously discussed on more than one occasion in the early part of the century, had received the blessing of Henry Pelham, and was again to be brought into prominence, in 1757, by Pitt. Newcastle brushed it aside, calling it "a bold stroke, a great concession or something to that purpose": and thought no more of it. But not so Fox. He had a long conversation with Viry, the Sardinian Minister, on the subject, and even went so far as to speak of it to D'Abreu. When this further development reached Newcastle's ears, he was furious, though the proposal was binding on no one. "I must tell the King of this, but I am sure he will be extremely angry. If such hints and advances are flung out by one of the Administration unknown to the others, what will be the consequence of it? What a scene is here of imprudence, folly, ambition and double dealing with us all!"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox's "Narrative of events for Lord Kildare" [May 1756]. The bill was thrown out on the second reading in the Upper House by Newcastle's influence.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently Spain was to win Minorca back for herself.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 12, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,866).

Besides these unpleasantnesses with his chief, Fox had the displeasure of the King to face. His Majesty had a secret yearning for Robinson, who had been displaced by his advent to office. George had a soft corner in his heart for the minister who could converse freely with him in his native tongue ; and the weakness of the present Secretary on the subject of foreign politics could not but add to his prejudice against the change. In addition, he was fully disposed to imbibe those insidious drops of poison with which Newcastle was plying him from time to time. Fox's methods were maligned at every turn, and his motives questioned, with little opportunity for explanation or defence. Small wonder if the King's feelings towards him began to take concrete shape. "He is black ; I know it, tho' I don't show it," said he to the First Lord, who was at the time engaged in feeding him up with "some little circumstances about Mr Fox as to little employments in the Treasury and House of Commons." "I wish the D. of Devonshire could be got from him," added the monarch. "The D. of Grafton is the man to do it." <sup>1</sup>

In May, Fox made one attempt to put himself right with the King. His action in requesting Murray, as a favour, to tell Granville that he had nothing but praise for Fox's conduct in the Commons during the past session, seems clearly to have been undertaken, in the hope that the Lord President, who was in His Majesty's good graces, would repeat what had passed.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond this he made little effort, and even contrived to turn the royal dissatisfaction to some advantage.

"At the end of a session wherein everything had gone surprisingly well, and during which I had not had a contest with any minister nor aim'd at anything but doing the business of the House of Commons well, His Majesty

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 8, 1756 (Add. MSS. 35,415).

<sup>2</sup> W. Murray to Newcastle, May 24, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,865).

is, from being excessively pleas'd, become discontented with me, and cold, not to say very cold, to me. Wherefore I have desired as a public mark of the favour I am not in, that my brother be made an earl, which will be." <sup>1</sup>

Henry Fox had long contemplated an attempt to obtain Ilchester's advancement ; in fact, more than a year before, he had advised him himself to write to Newcastle upon the subject.<sup>2</sup> But now the time had come to strike quickly, for fear of the changes which the autumn might bring forth. An amicable interview with the King on June 4, in which Fox pledged himself to take whatever course His Majesty desired upon certain thorny problems concerning Leicester House, led to a favourable reception of his request. This he further supplemented by expressing a hope that Lord Digby might receive an appointment in the Prince of Wales's Bedchamber. Both had raised regiments in the crisis during the spring, and had worked hard to obtain the necessary men. Ilchester kissed hands for his earldom on June 11.<sup>3</sup> It was a hard task no doubt to win this favour from the King, whose apprehensions about Prince George rendered him "willing to cajole" Fox "to a degree." <sup>4</sup> Yet, according to Newcastle's account, the latter still lay under the shadow of the royal displeasure, and clearly this demand was not further calculated to ingratiate him.

As the summer drew on, matters showed no signs of improvement, for on July 19 the King and Fox very nearly came to blows. The policy of the British Government was already tending to drive Holland into the arms of the enemy, though for the present she had been content to proclaim her neutrality. The demand that she should fulfil the obligations of her commercial treaty or contract

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Sir C. Hanbury-Williams, May 29, 1756 (Phillips MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Ilchester, April 10, 1755.

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Ellis, June 12, 1756.

<sup>4</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 12, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,865).



a new one,<sup>1</sup> and the seizure of her ships as carriers of contraband of war, were bitter pills for the States-General to swallow. Worse was to follow; for, in the middle of July, they were peremptorily ordered to declare war with France.<sup>2</sup> The memorial was temporarily suppressed by Yorke, in the hopes that the Dutch might move of their own accord; but his action was branded by Fox, who appears to have taken an active part in pushing this demand, as an assumption of unauthorised authority. The latter's criticism was bitterly resented by Holdernessee, the Secretary of State whose department controlled the relations between England and Holland, and it received no support from His Majesty, from whom Fox's unusual warmth "drew on a strong expression."<sup>3</sup>

We must now refer to the complications which had recently arisen at Leicester House. When the Prince of Wales attained his majority, the King rightly thought that he should make him some annual grant of money. At the end of May, Lord Waldegrave was sent with the intimation that His Majesty designed to provide him with an allowance of £40,000 a year, and that he had set aside special suites of apartments for him.<sup>4</sup> By this proposal George secretly hoped to undermine that combination between mother and son, which he had so signally failed to disturb in the past. This stroke was met by counterstroke. The Prince readily and gratefully accepted the offer of the money, but prayed not to be separated from the Princess, his mother. His reply, emanating, as

<sup>1</sup> Orders were to be given to Lord Hardwicke's son, Colonel Yorke, the British Minister at the Hague, to claim in form the execution of the treaty of 1678, the meaning of the requisition being, to authorise the King to declare the Marine Treaty of 1674 void, unless the States-General acted up to their other engagements (Cabinet minute, July 1, 1756). The recent refusal of the Dutch to send troops to England was the case in point.

<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 18, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,866).

<sup>3</sup> Holdernessee to Newcastle, July 19, 1756 (*ibid.*).

<sup>4</sup> They were to be the late Prince's rooms at Kensington, and the Queen's at St James's.

it was reported, from the pen of Legge, fixed the King on the horns of a dilemma. As no condition had been attached to the gift, he must either avow his stratagem, or accept its want of success in silence. Ministers were at a loss to know what advice to give, and no reply whatever was returned for upwards of a month.

At the same time, the Prince requested his grandfather, through Munchausen, the Hanoverian envoy, to appoint a groom-of-the-stole in his household in place of Lord Waldegrave; and specifically recommended Lord Bute for the post. Although this courtly Scotchman was ostensibly the Prince's friend and trusted adviser, rumours of an intrigue of a tender nature with his mother had of late been sedulously circulated, and had done him injury in the King's eyes. The latter further suspected him of an alliance with Pitt, and obstinately set his face against the appointment. The inmates of Leicester House, however, were equally determined to force it. They even took upon themselves to approach Newcastle with offers of future support, but he, either mistrusting their advances or swayed by Hardwicke,<sup>1</sup> refused to desert the old King, even to curry favour with the rising generation.

On July 7, a Cabinet Council was held to consider the whole matter, at which Waldegrave was present in his capacity as governor to the Prince,<sup>2</sup> a post which he was only too anxious to surrender. The feeling of the meeting was opposed to Bute's appointment, though warned by Waldegrave that refusal would probably mean open rupture. Granville expressed himself convinced that there must, in any case, be a quarrel in the Royal family, and thought, therefore, that the King should hold his hand. Fox asked how he was to defend such a refusal in the House of Commons, for His Majesty had already demonstrated by his original offer that £40,000 was a proper

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 62. Walpole mentions that the Chancellor was influenced by private spite against the Princess of Wales.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*; Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 66.

allowance. "You must *explain*," replied the Chancellor, "that in the first message something was meant which was known to both parties." Finally Newcastle again secured the postponement of any definite decision: though he consented, under pressure from Fox, to agree to a further consideration of the problem.<sup>1</sup>

But as time went on, his Grace, shaken by misfortune abroad and by the unpopularity of the Government at home, began to realise the advantage of humouring Leicester House. A pension, or some other office, must be found for Bute, if the King remained obdurate. The Duke of Argyll was put forward to treat with the Princess's favourite<sup>2</sup>; for the King had insisted from the commencement that Fox should have no hand in any such negotiations. Next, Hardwicke was despatched to eat his own words in the closet, and to recommend the appointment or some such favour. At last, in October, His Majesty gave way. At one blow the Prince obtained his groom-of-the-stole, his allowance and his freedom of residence.

Fox had all along supported this solution, and had consistently recommended it. "We are to have a meeting on Thursday, in which I suppose I shall be alone for advising the employment being given to Bute, desired for him by the Pr. and Prs of Wales. I will give it, and insist on the King knowing I give it. I suspect His Majesty has been told that I have been making court there, which is very false. He shall know my opinion and the honest reasons for it. I have no underhand, indirect ones."<sup>3</sup> He was right. Newcastle, snatching as usual every opportunity to misrepresent him, led His Majesty to believe that Fox was intriguing to obtain the Princess's favour, and that he had insisted upon Bute's nomination as his price for remaining in office.

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 64.

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, August 4, 1756 (*Torrens*, ii. 299).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, September 7, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

"I found that the King's bitterness against me had been occasion'd by perhaps one of the most treacherous and black transactions you have ever heard of. I, not in Council but in private, advis'd the D. of Newcastle to prevail on the King to oblige the Prince of Wales by placing Lord Bute about his person. I thought then and think still it was good and wise advice, and, tho' it ruin'd me with the King, without helping me at Leicester House, were it to give again, I should give it. After much consideration and delay, this honest statesman, the D. of N., determin'd to follow my advice for his own sake; but thought the best way of breaking it to the King, to please whom he had for six months talk'd against it without decency or moderation, would be to say that there was nobody but me to employ, and that I would not carry on his affairs in the H. of Commons without he gave Lord Bute what the Prince ask'd for him; and H.M. was brought to believe that I had private dealings and correspondence with Ld Bute, the D. of Argyll and Legge.

"In the meantime, the Duke of Newcastle never so much as ask'd my permission to mention my opinion to H.M. upon this matter, which opinion, by the way, never carry'd me so far as either to say or think that I would not or could not carry on H.M.'s affairs without Lord Bute was satisfy'd." <sup>1</sup>

By this episode Newcastle distinctly strengthened his position. He was able to pose as the well-wisher of the young court, and at the same time could gratify his spite by aggravating the King's displeasure with Fox. But in the last stage of the drama he managed to overstep the line. The publication of a list of eight or ten members of Parliament appointed to the Prince's household, drawn up without the Junior Secretary's cognisance, brought about the latter's immediate resignation. The fabric which Newcastle had erected with such care, in order to maintain his power, in an instant tottered and fell like a house of cards.

Throughout the autumn Fox had become more and

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative for Lord Kildare."



more discontented with his position. Public dissatisfaction with the Government was largely on the increase. Besides the catastrophe at Minorca and the news of the loss of Oswego, an error of judgment upon the part of Holderness and Murray, in ordering the release of a Hanoverian soldier imprisoned at Maidstone for a petty theft, fanned the flame.<sup>1</sup> Newcastle's sudden and amazing desire for activity late in July,<sup>2</sup> was not crowned with the success which he had anticipated. Pamphlet and caricature alike were put forward to misrepresent and vilify his Government. It is impossible to doubt that Fox's plans were largely influenced by these portents. The ship was sinking; and, circumstanced as he was, his aim was to escape before it was too late. Besides, Newcastle "treated him rather like an enemy whom he feared, than as a minister whom he had chose for his assistant."<sup>3</sup> The position had at last become untenable.

During the month of July, Fox asked Stone to arrange a special meeting between him and Newcastle. His Grace had no notion what was the reason of the request. It seems improbable that any interview took place at this time. Stone stated his belief, but not his grounds for it, that Fox intended to discuss the increasing difficulties of carrying on in the House of Commons, and would propose that he should retire in Pitt's favour, himself taking a less responsible post. The situation was discussed at Powis House<sup>4</sup> on July 22. It was there agreed that either Pitt or Fox must lead the Commons. As the

<sup>1</sup> Their action was probably in strict accordance with the dictates of justice. Unfortunately it drew fresh attention to the presence of the Hanoverians and Hessians, who by their orderly conduct in this country had done much to live down the general prejudice against them.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to H. Fox, July 24, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,866). "Nothing but some *attempt* will or can retrieve our situation. . . . For my own part, I think no expense should now be spared; we have gone too far for any consideration of that kind" (Newcastle to H. Fox, probably August 1756).

<sup>3</sup> Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Hardwicke's residence.

former was out of the question, it was arranged to sound Fox upon the future. If his reply was unsatisfactory, some one might be told off to take a "second part" in the House, in order to prove to the Secretary of State that he was not indispensable.<sup>1</sup>

To Stone, who was selected as negotiator, Fox made his views perfectly clear. He thought it very desirable to conciliate the Princess of Wales by Bute's appointment. If this was impossible, he advised that his own Secretaryship should be offered to Pitt, a course to which he professed himself perfectly agreeable, though he doubted whether the proposal would be accepted. Stone afterwards declared his belief that Fox would still hold on, if these suggestions did not meet with approval, "with a previous declaration, that he should not be answerable for the miscarriage, or have it in any way imputed to him."<sup>2</sup> Stone told Fox that Newcastle was sincere. He was most anxious for his Grace "to go out of the dangerous and unmanageable place he is in"; and said that he himself also wished it. The truth of both these statements Fox could not but accept with hesitation.<sup>3</sup>

On the following day Fox paid a visit to Hardwicke, which resulted in "a most courteous and barren conversation." He seems to have repeated what he had said to Stone, and pointed out that the surest way to secure Leicester House was to secure Pitt, for the Princess would not be able to make any sort of show without adherents. He again clearly stated that he would "give way to Pitt, and yet join with him."<sup>4</sup> On August 19, the *Public Advertiser* inserted an anonymous letter, recommending the reconciliation of "two gentlemen of apparent superiority to all others of either party," as the best

<sup>1</sup> *Memorandum*, July 22, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,997).

<sup>2</sup> August 3, 1756 (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, August 4, 1756 (*Torrens*, ii. 300).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* See also Hardwicke to Col. Yorke (*Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 330).

thing for the country. No names were mentioned, but it required only the meanest intellect to understand the allusion. When shown the extract by the Chancellor, the King expressed his disapproval.<sup>1</sup> The former was anxious that some message should be sent to Pitt, especially as Fox could not manufacture a grievance out of it after what had passed.<sup>2</sup> And as Lady Yarmouth's opinion coincided with his own,<sup>3</sup> the scheme had still distinct possibilities.

About this time Fox was laid up with a severe cold, which affected his throat. His life was never in any danger, as was reported in some of the papers.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, he had a long conversation with Newcastle on September 1. Fox used the identical language which he had employed to Stone and Hardwicke. He advised Bute's appointment and Pitt's employment, though he said that he thought the latter would only come in on very high terms. For himself, he was willing to surrender his place.<sup>5</sup> Subsequent to this date the two men wasted but few words upon one another. "I have little or no discourse with Mr Fox. He is grave and rather down."<sup>6</sup> And even a conference which Newcastle sought unasked towards the end of September led to no result: for the other refused to be drawn. Their want of confidence was mutual. His Grace had no belief in the genuineness of Fox's recent offer about Pitt. He looked upon it as in the nature of a threat, although the Junior Secretary had gone so far as to repeat his promise.

There seems indeed no adequate reason to doubt Fox's sincerity, though it is difficult to throw light upon the inmost workings of his mind, and to explain his motives. Was his soul again yearning for tranquillity and repose, at the expense of his love of power? "You *should* be

<sup>1</sup> Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 20, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,866).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, August 29.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 2, 1756 Add. (MSS. 32,866)

<sup>4</sup> C. Amyand to W. Ellis, August 26, 1756.

<sup>5</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, September 18, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,867).

ambitious," said Granville, when Fox spoke to him of "his unambitious temper." "I want to instil a nobler ambition into you: to make you knock the heads of the Kings of Europe together, and jumble something out of it that may be of service to this country."<sup>1</sup> It is plain at least that the thought of a less responsible post was gaining the upper hand with him. And yet, notwithstanding, he clung to office. Doubtless he realised the difficulties of returning to his present high station, once he had surrendered it of his own accord. He hoped perhaps that the initiative would come from Newcastle. To be taken at his word, and to be dismissed in favour of Pitt, for the convenience of ministers, must surely ensure a reasonable compensation. So long as therefore his prerogatives were unassailed, he was content to remain. But on this very rock the ship stranded.

Possibly Fox might have overlooked the incident of the list, had he not felt convinced from the way in which it was done that the slight was intentional. "To shew that it was not by chance, Newcastle told me that he had destined the vacant seat at the Board of Trade, but was not at liberty to tell me to whom." Apparently the right upon which Fox had so firmly insisted—a full knowledge of the patronage which was being dispensed—was to be abrogated in the future.

But his cause for annoyance was not confined to this breach of faith. Newcastle announced to him, as a sop, that he had obtained a Bedchamber post for Lord Digby in the Prince's household.<sup>2</sup> He frankly told Fox that the King was very adverse to giving his consent, and took great praise to himself for having arranged it. "The King refused Lord Digby absolutely, with asperity, as his Grace represented it, but his Grace urging his regard to

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Fox had asked for this appointment in June, when he obtained the earldom for Ilchester. Newcastle wrote at the time to his adviser-in-chief that he thought it very improbable that Fox would obtain all he asked. (Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 12, 1756. Add. MSS. 32,865.)



me and the *affront* (his Grace's word) it would be to me, His Majesty said, 'My Lord, if you desire it to oblige you; if it will please you, I will do it.'"<sup>1</sup> He added, however, that if Lord Rockingham, one of the King's Lords of the Bedchamber, insisted on joining the Prince's household, matters would be somewhat complicated. Still, he assured Fox that it would make no ultimate difference, for Lord Huntingdon would then exchange into His Majesty's household, and a vacancy would equally occur.

This Fox looked upon in the light of a distinct promise. But on October 5, he received a letter from his Grace definitely announcing that Lord Rockingham was to be appointed to the Prince's household. Newcastle added, "I am only concern'd that if it should be so, it will disappoint for the present my wishes for my Lord Digby."<sup>2</sup>

Fox's temper flared up at this new insult. He had already told his nephew that all was arranged, and wrote on the following day to Newcastle, that he was surprised "beyond measure" at the expression in his letter. He would look upon it as a greater disgrace to him than ever was yet undeservedly put upon any man.<sup>3</sup> He further opened his heart to Stone. The draft of this letter is preserved, and enables us to judge his fury at the untoward situation in which he was placed.

"I do not know whether I am to imagine from hence that the negotiation with Mr Pitt is far advanced, but I am told it is not begun.<sup>4</sup> In these circumstances, dear Sir, I must beg you to stop it. I retract all good humour'd dealing. I may be turn'd out, and I suppose I shall. But I will not be used like a dog, without having given the least provocation (suppose I should say with the

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to A. Stone, October 7, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to H. Fox, October 5, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> Add. MSS. 32,868.

<sup>4</sup> Barrington had taken upon himself a few days before to approach Fox for a fresh assurance (given without demur) that he would surrender his place to Pitt.

utmost merit to those who use me so), and be like that dog a spaniel. I do not consent that Mr Pitt should have my place, and promise to be in good humour or even on any terms with those that give it him." <sup>1</sup>

On second thoughts he sensibly erased the whole passage, but the sentences remain to testify to the bitter feelings which underlay his course of action.

Newcastle's excuses were lame and inconclusive. He called the episode "an unforeseen accident," and hoped that if Fox would consider matters again, he would look on them in a different light. He prided himself, however, that Murray and Stone could not say much in favour of their friend Fox <sup>2</sup>; but his assertion is hardly borne out by Murray's letter to him of the same date.<sup>3</sup> Even his faithful Lord Chancellor wrote that he could excuse Fox for a little warmth on his nephew's subject, "but as to the great question about reposing the sole dependence *there*," he could see "all the danger of it." <sup>4</sup> In this he was right. Fox was utterly disgusted with the treatment meted out to him, and had at last determined to be off. Not even Newcastle's note on the 12th, announcing that Digby's post was assured, as Rockingham, at the King's request, would remain where he was,<sup>5</sup> made any difference. Fox's mind was made up. To resign he was determined.

He paved the way on the preceding day, in a long conversation with Stone, by a recital of his grievances. He had been misrepresented, and was consequently out of favour with the King; he was not treated with that frankness, especially in the distribution of favours, which he considered was his due. Leicester House disliked him for his attachment to Cumberland, and yet as leader of the Commons he would have to shoulder responsibilities

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to A. Stone, October 7, 1756 (draft).

Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 10, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,868).

<sup>2</sup> Add. MSS. 32,868.

Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 11, 1756 (*ibid.*).

Newcastle to H. Fox, October 12, 1756.

which were not his to bear. Stone could say no more than that he thought the complaints of ill-usage would be news to his Grace, but looked "concerned."<sup>1</sup> Clearly from his language things were not to remain *in statu quo*, and the very thought drove Newcastle to distraction. "Mr Fox is now in a worse temper than ever to come to any right understanding with us." What was to be the next move? Should Pitt be approached, or Legge separated from the rest? "For God's sake, my dear Lord," he wrote, "tell me what to do, and I will follow it."<sup>2</sup> Lady Yarmouth, in whom he also confided, gave him little consolation. All she would say was, that he must do the best he could with Mr Fox, "for we cannot change him." Seemingly, the court had little intention at that time of employing Pitt.

On the 13th, a note from Fox was put into Newcastle's hand at the Treasury Board. It commenced with a polite expression of thanks for Digby's appointment. Then came the announcement of impending resignation. "The step I am going to take is not only necessary but innocent. It shall be accompanied by no complaint; it shall be followed by no resentment. But it is not the less true that my present situation is impracticable."<sup>3</sup> "What shall I do?" was all his Grace could gasp, as he sank back in his chair and handed the letter to Nugent.<sup>4</sup>

The truth was that Fox's blow had been struck before the Minister was in readiness. Newcastle had hoped that Fox would take a hand against Pitt. But now that the former had dropped out of his own accord, it was time to add up the score. The game could not proceed without two players.

In announcing to Welbore Ellis the step which he was about to take, Fox wrote: "My view is to get out of

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, October 11, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,868).

<sup>3</sup> Add. MSS. 32,868.

<sup>4</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii. 88.

the court and never come into it again. As the latter is sincerely as much my intention as the former, it is not so necessary to consult my friends." <sup>1</sup> Yet in duty bound he at once informed Cumberland, who agreed that he was in the right.<sup>2</sup> Devonshire was the recipient of a long letter; to which he replied that under the circumstances his friend could not act in any other way. He reiterated an entreaty that Fox should not allow himself to be drawn into opposition.

Fox also called upon and consulted Granville, on the 13th, who, notwithstanding his dissertation upon the advantages of ambition, recognised the impossibility of further co-operation with Newcastle. To the Lord President's house Fox again returned, after a visit to Lady Yarmouth. He had intended to persuade her to give the King a paper which he had drawn up explaining his position. But she refused to mix herself up in the matter; and a second attempt to send it to her in the evening appeared to be equally unsuccessful. Warned by Newcastle, she returned the document to Fox on the following day: but not till noon, a fact which convinced Newcastle that the King had seen it.<sup>3</sup> The lady did her utmost to persuade Fox to withdraw his resignation.

"Monsieur Fox, vous êtes trop honnête homme pour quitter à présent. S'il y avait quatre ou cinq mois avant que le Parlement s'assemble, à la fin de la session vous ferez ce que vous voudrez; mais à présent de jeter tout en confusion! Regardez à la situation des affaires. Non, je n'excuse pas le Duc de Newcastle; c'est dur, c'est pénible, mais quand vous aurez pensé un peu au Roi, à la patrie, vous continuerez cette session." <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> October 12, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> "He owns, with the utmost concern, that I can go on no longer." (H. Fox to Digby, October 11, 1756. Melbury MSS.)

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 14, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,868).

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox to Digby [October 14, 1756] (*Hist. MSS. Comm. Rep.*, viii. p. 220).



At the moment her words had no effect. Fox remained obdurate, and at her request, begged Granville to carry his memorandum to the King. Yet her simple reminder induced him to give further consideration to the possibility of some personal sacrifice, a thought which had already crossed his mind.

"I considered my situation, and you will not wonder that, on the 13th of Octr, I sent to the King the paper you have seen. At the same time I told H.R.Hss, and wrote the D. of Devonshire word, that if they had been such fools as to offer my place to Pitt without knowing that he would accept it, and that nothing but confusion, with distress to the King's affairs, was likely to ensue, I would go on under the D. of N. another sessions, upon a private promise from the King to be dismissed then. But I was never ask'd by King or Minister to stay, so had no opportunity of executing this intention."<sup>1</sup>

It is more than doubtful, therefore, whether the offer ever reached the proper quarter.

Whether the scheme lay in the realms of possibility, was another matter.

"H.R.Hss, who I am to see to-morrow, will be for my going on for this session. Even he will not be for my going on longer. But is this practicable? I shall be a minister in the House who shall be known not to intend to remain. The D. of N. will be a minister who they must know cannot remain. Mr Pitt opposing both. Whom are the members to look up to? Who is to combine and direct the majority; and (my God!) upon what points?"<sup>2</sup>

To return to Newcastle. Labouring under the stress of strong emotion, he also hurried to Lord Granville, and

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative for Lord Kildare." The passage in his letter to the Duke of Devonshire reads as follows: "If Pitt refuses, and I think he will, I shall be said to desert the service at a pinch, to be a coward, or a designing man that sacrifices His Majesty's affairs and puts them into confusion to gratify his interest or his resentment. Here then will arise a point of honour, and indeed of conscience, which I will satisfy thus" (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Digby [October 1756] (*Hist. MSS. Comm. Rep.*, viii. p. 221a).

flung the offer of his own place at his head. The Lord President displayed no gratitude whatever for the favour. "I thought," he said, "I had cured you of such offers last year: I will be hanged a little before I take your place, rather than a little after."<sup>1</sup> Newcastle gleaned the news that Fox had failed to move Lady Yarmouth. To warn her that a further visit was intended was, as we have noticed, his next care. On the 14th, he saw the King. The first word was an invaluable asset in the Newcastle system, and he doubtless made full use of his opportunity. We may be sure that the old stories of his Grace's belief in the insincerity of Fox's offer, of the latter's desire to stop at nothing but the Treasury, and of his ingratitude to His Majesty for past favours, were given full scope, for the King "afterwards expressed himself with great bitterness against Mr Fox." But when he realised that the only choice lay between "gratifying" Fox and taking Pitt, he somewhat changed his tone. "Mr Pitt won't come. . . . Mr Pitt won't do my German business. . . . I don't like Pitt." And finally, "I will talk to Fox, and see what I can do." This was by no means what Newcastle intended. "He will not talk to you, Sir," muttered he, quoting Granville as his informant. "I will begin with him," returned the King. "We shall gain time, if he would stay this session only." From this Newcastle opined that His Majesty wished to avoid Pitt, and "would come a great way to gratify Fox." Lady Yarmouth too, he believed, was "heart and soul, *now*, for keeping Mr Fox."<sup>2</sup>

But on the following morning, the King's mood had unaccountably changed, and was reflected in Lady Yarmouth's altered demeanour. Granville had "managed his message . . . with very indifferent discretion."<sup>3</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Memoirs*, ii, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 14, 1756 (Add. MSS. 32,868).

<sup>3</sup> R. Rigby to Bedford, Holland House, October 15, 1756 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii, 200).

too had been preceded in the closet by Newcastle, who obtained His Majesty's permission to approach Pitt. The King appeared much irritated with Fox, and with the contents of his memorandum. Yet sheets of drafts at Holland House show the time and care expended in its preparation. Fox therein explained his readiness to give way to Pitt, and take an inferior office ("a subaltern employment," he called it),<sup>1</sup> whenever that should be His Majesty's pleasure. He stated that he had repeated this fact to Newcastle at Barrington's request, and expressed a hope that the negotiation had been actually undertaken; for, he despaired, from lack of support, of being able to carry on the business of the House of Commons. He desired therefore that some new arrangement might be concocted, in which, if His Majesty thought him worthy of any employment not of the Cabinet, he would attend and give all the assistance he could in Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The King underlined the offending phrases in Granville's presence,<sup>3</sup> and subsequently handed the paper to Holderness, who was told to pass it on to Newcastle. His Majesty spoke of the many favours which he had bestowed on Fox and his family, and complained of his ingratitude. Finally he ordered Granville to tell Fox to appeal to his conscience and ask himself whether he was doing right in quitting his service at this critical moment.

At first sight it seems curious, remembering Fox's evident inclination to meet the King's wishes half-way, that Granville had not been entrusted with a message, to the effect that the Secretary of State was willing to continue for the session. The serious difficulty of such a situation, which Fox had only subsequently realised, after consultation with his friends, is the probable explana-

<sup>1</sup> Fox to W. Ellis [October 12, 1756].

<sup>2</sup> Add. MSS. 32,868.

<sup>3</sup> The actual words were, "I find my credit in the House of Commons diminishes for want of support, and think it impracticable for me to carry on His Majesty's affairs as they ought to be carried on."

tion. Nearly all the advice which he had received was thrown into the same scale. "I hope Pitt will come, and then my path is plain. But if he does not, the more I think of the generous plan and the point of honour, the less I think it practicable; and if it is not practicable, neither H.R.H. nor your Grace can approve of it."<sup>1</sup> Had His Majesty made a personal appeal to Fox, in the course of the audience which was arranged by Lady Yarmouth on the 18th, the offer would doubtless have been made. Fox certainly wrote feelingly upon what he termed "the point of honour." But no suggestion was dropped that the Secretary should retain his place, and he was probably relieved to find himself free from the necessity of volunteering for a forlorn hope.

Indeed, the conversation assumed a form which more than confirmed Fox in his resignation to resign. The King "was calm, serious, full of anger, but determined not to show it."<sup>2</sup> Yet he made no concessions, put forward no request to him to stay: and at the last moment one of the chief reasons for the royal resentment leaked out. He considered Fox had been the means of forcing "that puppy" Bute upon him: and felt assured that he had been intriguing with the Princess. "Sir, what I am so happy in, my attachment to your son, might have assured you against that," was Fox's dignified reply.

Here was plain proof of the campaign of slander which Newcastle had so ably conducted. The mischief was done; but at least Fox could retaliate by refusing to act any longer with his Grace. And so the audience concluded with the announcement that his resignation was unavoidable, as his intention was now made public, though not by him.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fox to Devonshire, October 16, 1756 (Devonshire MSS.).

<sup>2</sup> H. Fox to Bedford, October 19, 1756 (*Bedford Corres.*, ii. 202).



## APPENDIX A

(See page 182)

### FROM A DRAFT IN THE HANDWRITING OF THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE

THE King, soon after his return from Hanover in November 1752, found great confusion in the P. of Wales's family. Earl Harcourt and the Bishop of Norwich, the one governor, the other preceptor to H.R.H., were both much displeased. The persons they chiefly accused were Mr Stone the sub-governor ; Mr Cresset, treasurer to the Prince, also secretary and first minister to the Princess of Wales ; and Scott, the sub-preceptor.

The crimes objected against them were : Jacobite connexions, instilling Tory principles, and Scott was moreover pronounced an atheist on the presumptive evidence of being a philosopher and a mathematician.

The real fact was this : the B. of Norwich, who, from having been the first chaplain to an Archbishop, and afterwards chaplain at court, thought himself equally qualified to govern both church and state, persuaded Harcourt, an honest, worthy man, but whose heart was better than his head, that they as governor and preceptor must be the sole directors of the young Prince, and that not even the Princess herself ought to have the least influence over him.

Harcourt having approved the proposal, they formed their plan of operations, and began to carry it into execution. But the plot was soon discovered ; the Princess took the alarm, Stone and Cresset were consulted, and Harcourt and the Bishop were soon defeated without the least difficulty.

This passed while the King was in Germany. On His Maj.'s arrival they made their last effort, that Stone, Cresset and Scott might be turned out for the reasons already men-

tioned. They also endeavoured to raise jealousies against the Princess, as secretly favouring the Opposition formed by her late husband. But again failing in their attempt, they both resigned their employment.

However, though Harcourt and the Bishop succeeded so ill at court, they had better success with the public ; for the nation in general was on their side. There is a certain popularity which usually attends a voluntary resignation, especially when it proceeds from a point of honour.

Many even of those who were friends to the Pelhams and to the Administration were much dissatisfied. Others exclaimed loudly that we were governed by Jacobites, that Stone and Murray, the Duke of Newcastle's two cabinet counsellors, were known Jacobites at Oxford, and that if they had changed their old principles, they still adhered to their old connexions.

That, on the other hand, Lord Harcourt was a nobleman of known honour, spirit and integrity, a steady Whig, every way qualified for the education of the heir apparent.

In a word, the names of Lord Harcourt and of the Bishop of Norwich were artfully made use of to raise such a clamor, that it was much doubted whether proper persons would be found who would dare to be their successors.

Under these circumstances I was applied to as one who was more attached to the King than to his ministers, for they would not venture to put in a known creature of their own. In this respect, I fully answered their purpose, for, though none of their dependants, I had a very sincere esteem and friendship for Mr Pelham, and was at least a well-wisher to the D. of Newcastle.

About a fortnight after Lord Harcourt's resignation, the affair was mentioned to me from the King by the D. of Newcastle ; who told me his Majesty did not chuse to speak to me himself, that I might be at full liberty to either accept or refuse as I liked best.

## APPENDIX B

(See p. 228)

AN interesting account of some of Fox's remarks on November 25, 1754, is given in a precis, in the *Archives des Affaires Étrangères* (Angleterre, t. 437), sent by M. Boutet to Marquis de Rouillé on December 5. These papers, owing to the war, have only recently become available (September 1919); and any special matter which we have been able to extract from them must therefore be relegated to this position.

After referring to Pitt's speech, M. Boutet continued :

" M. Fox prit ensuite la parole, et, après un fort beau préambule de son attachement pour le Roi et pour l'État, dit qu'il regardait l'état libre des membres du Parlement comme la pierre de touche de la liberté de la nation Anglaise ; que la corruption que certain grand personnage avait employé dans des dernières elections attaquait cette même liberté dont tout bon patriote devait être jaloux, et qu'il était comme indispensable que la Chambre prit toutes les précautions possibles pour arrester le progrès de cette corruption, en connaître les auteurs et les coupables pour les punir, afin que le mal n'empirât point, et qu'il n'y eut aucune funeste suite pour l'avenir ; qu'en son particulier il y travaillerait de toutes ses forces, et qu'il espérait d'être efficacement secondé par ce qu'il avait de bons patriotes." <sup>1</sup>

At first sight it would appear curious that such sentiments should be found issuing from Fox's lips ; yet his insistence on the necessity for the pre-eminence and inviolability of Parliament is in complete accord with many of his later utterances on this subject.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to a phrase of Pitt, who had said : " Que lui, Pitt, était trop bon patriote pour ne pas en gémir et pour ne pas être indigne des expressions telles que celles dont venait de se servir M. Robinson."

## APPENDIX C

(See page 233)

### MEMORANDUM OF WHAT PASSED AT THE AUDIENCE MR FOX HAD OF THE KING ON THE SECOND OF DECEMBER 1754

*(Extract from the Waldegrave MSS.)*

"THE K. told Mr F. that he wanted to have some conversation with him. Began by saying that he was not pleased with his conduct relating to what passed in the House about the Reading election. Mr Fox excused himself.

"The K. next asked Mr F. whether he had no political connexion with Mr Pitt. Mr F. denied having any political connexion, upon his honor.

"The K. told him next, that he knew him to be a man of abilities and a man of spirit, asked him if, instead of opposing his ministers or endeavouring to render them contemptible in the H. of C., whether he would engage to defend them and his measures when they were attacked. Mr F.'s answer did not appear to me quite explicit; however, it seemed to imply that he would do it, provided he was so far enabled that he could do it effectually and with credit to himself, and that he did not mean to be unreasonable in his demands.

"Next, talked of going to the D. of N., and saying every thing that was proper. The K. proposed Ld W.<sup>1</sup> going first from Mr F., and after that they might go together.

"What Mr F. proposed seemed to be to this effect, that he was ready and willing to act, not only in concert with the D. of N., but to be entirely under his direction; that he did not desire to have anything to do with the secret-service money, or to have the disposal of any places, or to have any

<sup>1</sup> Lord Waldegrave.



real power, only that the appearance of it was necessary. What he should desire was to be Secretary of State for the Department of War, that the commissions should pass through his office.

“That he thought turning out Mr P. would be both hurtful to himself and wrong for the K.’s service. That by putting him in some degree at the head of the H. of Commons, Mr P. would either resign his employment or lose his credit by acting an under-part, or else would oppose in place, which would be a justifiable reason for turning him out. But that putting Mr F. in Mr P.’s place would be only setting him as a mark for Mr P. to pelt at, and as that place did not make him a minister, he could not speak with proper authority. But if he was Secretary of State for War, he would be far from fearing Mr P., nor would he ever complain to any one of Mr P.’s using him ill.”

## APPENDIX D

(See p. 248)

MR RIKER (*Henry Fox*, i. 261) shortly refers to Mirepoix's suspicions of Fox's motives at this time. The bitterness of the French Ambassador's language with regard to him lays stress on the feeling of actual terror with which the former seems to have been inspired. A few short extracts, therefore, from his letters to Rouillé at this period (*Archives des Affaires Étrangères*. Angleterre, t. 438) may be desirable.

On January 16, 1755, Mirepoix related how Newcastle had recently allowed Fox to attend meetings of the Cabinet, when invited to do so on special occasions, though no precedent for the presence of the Secretary-at-War at these deliberations could be found since the reign of Queen Anne. He added : " C'est un grand avantage pour M. Fox, et dont il saura profiter mieux qu'un autre. Il est ambitieux, hardi, accrédité et protégé décidément par le Duc de Cumberland. Il ne s'en tiendra sûrement pas à la rade que lui a mesuré le Duc de Newcastle."

A week later he spoke of him again as opposing Newcastle's moderate proposals, and as urging the necessity that England should make the most of her opportunities, before the French fleet was ready for action : " C'est un homme aussi violent que téméraire et ambitieux, et qui, pour arriver à son but, portera les choses aux dernières extrémités, sans être retenu par aucune considération." He wrote that he had expressed his belief to Newcastle that the King of England had no wish for more trouble, " et c'est une raison puissante dont le Duc de Newcastle peut se servir auprès de ce Prince pour l'éloigner Mr Fox que de le lui représenter comme un homme suspect à la France, et il nous doit l'être plus qu'aucun Anglais que je connaisse, tout par la véhémence de son caractère, que par ses liaisons avec le Duc de Cumberland."

END OF VOL. I



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